



Daily Report

Tuesday, 25 February 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 25 February 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:34 P.M., 25 February 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

CABINET OFFICE

Deidre Brock: [\[15031\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria his Department uses to select the patient-side participants in meetings on resolving the contaminated blood scandal.

Deidre Brock: [\[15032\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the (a) agendas and (b) minutes of the meetings with patient-side participants on the contaminated blood scandal.

Chloe Smith:

The attendance list for the recent meeting between Ministers and campaigners was the subject of careful consideration by Cabinet Office to ensure representation from a wide range of groups across the infected and affected communities.

The agenda for the 28 January meeting was circulated to attendees before the meeting. The record of the meeting has been circulated to attendees for comments on factual accuracy. The Cabinet Office has no plans to publish the minute.

DEFENCE

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment his Department has made of the security of the supply of critical materials for the UK defence industry.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence recognises the importance of working with industry to assure the resilience of defence supply chains. We routinely engage with our key suppliers to ensure we have access to the capabilities our Armed Forces require.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 5354 on Household Cavalry: Armoured Fighting Vehicles, what the cost to the public purse is of that delay.

Jeremy Quin:

There is no cost to the public purse as a result of the delay to the Household Cavalry receiving AJAX.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 5344 on Unmanned Air Vehicles, whether the procurement process was subject to open competition.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 5344 on Unmanned Air Vehicles, whether the mechanical improvements were undertaken in the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

No. The undercarriage modifications were undertaken by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (GA-ASI) in the USA, in order to maintain the updated, standard Reaper air vehicle configuration.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 5344 on Unmanned Air Vehicles, what the cost to the public purse was of the mechanical improvements to each drone.

Jeremy Quin:

The undercarriage design was improved during production of the UK air vehicles. In total, four Reapers underwent modification at a cost of £247,000; an average cost of £61,750 per Reaper.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[15153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2020 to Question 13610 and the Answer of 3 February 2020 to Question 9095, on International Military Services: Finance, what plans he has to ensure that IMS Ltd complies in the 2019-20 financial year with the requirements of the Ordnance Factories and Military Services Act 1984 in respect of the (a) £382 million payment into court and (b) £5 million dividend paid in 2010 to the then Secretary of State.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department will always comply with any applicable substantive or procedural requirements of legislation.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of Reaper drones currently operated by the RAF contain UK content.

Jeremy Quin:

The Reaper unmanned air vehicle was procured as an Urgent Operational Requirement in 2007 and none have UK components installed. UK communications equipment has, however, been installed in the Reaper ground control station.

Jonathan Edwards:

[1942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his Greek counterpart on the recent deployment of two French frigates to the Eastern Mediterranean.

James Heappey:

The Secretary of State for Defence has not discussed the recent deployment of French frigates to the Eastern Mediterranean with the Greek Defence Minister.

Luke Pollard:

[2057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with the Foreign Secretary on the protection of Royal Navy wrecks in Asia.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office take the illegal salvage of our wrecks in South East Asia extremely seriously and are saddened at the level of salvage that has previously taken place. The Government considers the wrecks to be the final resting place of our servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and they should be allowed to rest in peace.

The matter has been raised with the Indonesian and Malaysian Governments and we continue to work closely with the relevant authorities in the region to afford these sites suitable protection.

Luke Pollard:

[2058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of raising the anchors of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse for posterity before they are removed from the seabed by metal scavengers.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence considers the wrecks of our warships to be the final resting place of our servicemen.

While we have assessed that recovery of the anchors from HMS PRINCE OF WALES and HMS REPULSE could be possible, this would require significant planning and considerable resource, both in retrieval and in conserving them for display. Recovery would also be counter to our stance of not disturbing our wrecks, in honour of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The Ship's Bells from both ships were visible alongside the respective wrecks and were recovered. They are now held as lasting memorials, and for the benefit of the nation, by the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Tulip Siddiq:****[15106]**

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to bring forward legislation to hold to account the management of social media companies that do not take reasonable steps to identify and respond to child abuse on their platforms.

Caroline Dinenage:

In the Queen's speech on December 19 2019, the Government confirmed plans to develop legislation to improve internet safety. This is a complex and difficult task and we are working hard to get the proposals right. DCMS and the Home Office are working at pace to commence the legislative process and introduce a Bill once Parliamentary time allows.

Martyn Day:**[15152]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to minimise (a) the digital divide and (b) digital exclusion particularly among older people.

Caroline Dinenage:

The UK Government recognises the vital importance of digital skills at all levels - from the basic digital skills people need to make the most of being online, to the general digital skills increasingly needed in every job, through to the high level digital skills for the growing number of specialist digital roles across the economy. As nearly all future jobs will require digital skills we are taking action across the entire education and training pipeline.

The UK Government recognises that, although we live in an increasingly online world, a significant part of the population remains digitally excluded Government is committed to helping elderly people acquire basic digital skills as part of our broader strategy to reduce digital exclusion as outlined in the Digital Strategy.

Government is addressing the digital divide through a number of initiatives.

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

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

Chi Onwurah:

[1965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of divergence on EU data protection rules on the UK receiving an adequacy agreement from the EU.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The European Commission has the power to determine whether a country outside the EU offers an adequate level of data protection to transfer data with EU member states. "Adequacy" requires that high data protection standards are met, it does not require countries to have identical laws.

As with all policy areas, it is important that the UK retains the ability to set its own policy, laws and regulations. Data protection and data rights are no different. Data protection laws will inevitably naturally develop as technology and business practices change.

The UK is committed to making sure we have high data protection standards and will have an independent policy on data protection at the end of the transition period. We remain committed to seeking "adequacy decisions" from the EU.

Chi Onwurah:

[1966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the volume of UK-EU digital trade after the transition period.

Mr John Whittingdale:

In 2018 the UK's digital sector exported £22bn of services to the EU, and imported £14bn, increases of 11 and 17 percent respectively since 2017. Following the transition period, the UK is seeking the best possible trading relationship with both the EU and other trading partners for our digital sector.

Tulip Siddiq:

[1970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent steps her Department has taken to (a) remove and (b) limit access by young people to websites which promote suicide.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government is committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to go online. We are developing world-leading laws to introduce a new duty of care on online companies towards their users. The duty of care will be overseen by an independent regulator who will set clear standards and have strong enforcement powers to deal with non-compliance.

Government has also formed a partnership of suicide prevention experts funded by social media companies to support people and improve research. This work will create an evidence base around suicide and self-harm content online and produce best practice guidelines and standards for industry on how to respond to harmful content online.

Chi Onwurah:**[1975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to update the digital regulatory regime.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government is making a range of significant updates to the digital regulatory regime to ensure digital technologies work for everyone. This work is guided by the need to promote fair and efficient markets where the benefits of technology are shared widely across communities; ensure the safety and security of those online; and maintain a thriving democracy and society, where pluralism and freedom of expression are fully protected.

Our recent work includes developing measures to address online harms, improving competition in digital markets, and supporting the sustainability of our media industry in the face of new challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies.

Across our work we will ensure our overarching regulatory regime is fundamentally pro-innovation and agile, adapting dynamically to emerging new technologies. This will build confidence and clarity for businesses and users, and reinforce the UK's position as a global leader in proportionate and innovation-friendly regulation.

Over the coming months we will engage experts, regulators, industry, and civil society to ensure we have the right tools and institutions in place to respond strategically to the challenges of the digital age.

Chi Onwurah:**[1977]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Ofcom on (a) past reductions and (b) potential future reductions in its budget.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Department has regular discussions with Ofcom about a range of matters, including about its budget. Ofcom is self-funded by fees it receives from industry, as well as through the Wireless Telegraphy Act licence fee receipts it retains to fund Spectrum Management on behalf of the Government. Ofcom's spending is restricted by a budget cap, which is agreed by DCMS and HM Treasury. Ofcom's budget cap for 2019/20 is £124.2m.

Chi Onwurah:**[1978]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with representatives of (a) social media and (b) other tech platforms on funding for Ofcom, after Ofcom takes on regulatory responsibility for online harms.

Caroline Dinenage:

In response to the Online Harms White Paper, the Government ran a consultation from 8 April 2019 to 1 July 2019 which received over 2,400 responses from a wide range of stakeholders and organisations, including members of the public. The Government has also undertaken extensive engagement over the last 12 months with

representatives from industry which, alongside the consultation responses, has been reflected in the Online Harms White Paper initial response published on 12 February 2020. Overall, respondents and stakeholders agreed that, whilst funding should primarily be from industry, the ultimate funding structure for the Online Harms regulator should be proportionate and practical. The Government is currently carrying out extensive analysis on potential funding options. Full details of the funding mechanism for the Online Harms regulatory regime will be set out in due course.

Chi Onwurah:

[1979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to stop the spread of misinformation online.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government takes misinformation online seriously and is undertaking work to tackle this and the related issue of online disinformation. The Government's view is that in order to reduce the potential impact of disinformation (and misinformation), we must take account not only of the actors involved, but of the environment that enables them to spread and amplify falsehoods, and the audience that they reach.

On 12 February the Government published its Initial Consultation Response to the Online Harms White Paper. The response sets out our direction of travel on a number of key areas, and confirmed that a media literacy strategy will be published in Summer 2020. This strategy will aim to support citizens in thinking critically about material they come across online. The Government is also taking action to increase public awareness with the 'Don't Feed The Beast' campaign. This aims to educate and empower those who see, inadvertently share and are affected by false and misleading information.

The Initial Consultation Response also announced that we are minded to appoint Ofcom as the regulator for online harms, and provided details on the proposed approach of the regulator. Further detail on proposals on online harms regulation will be released in the spring.

Tulip Siddiq:

[1980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to sanction search engine companies that do not remove websites that promote suicide.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government published the initial response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation on 12 February 2020. This confirmed that the Government is developing legislation on online harms to establish a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. Companies in scope will not be required to remove specific items of legal content; however, they will be required to put in place systems and processes to deal with harmful content, and in particular, to minimise the risk of young people and vulnerable users encountering harm online.

The duty of care will apply to companies that provide services which facilitate the sharing of user generated content or user interactions. Requirements will differ according to the service offered and will be proportionate to the size and capabilities of the platform, alongside the risk to users on each platform. Final details regarding companies and services in scope will be published in the full Government response later this year.

To ensure compliance, the regulator will have the power to issue warnings, notices and fines. We are considering the responses to the consultation on senior management liability and business disruption measures, such as ISP blocking, and will set out our final policy position in the full Government response.

Chi Onwurah:

[1981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that misinformation on Covid-19 on social media channels is removed.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is clear that inaccurate information about public health matters can be harmful. The response to Covid-19 is being led by Cabinet Office, Department for Health and Social Care and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Government is actively working to ensure that the public has access to accurate information. The Government launched a public information campaign setting out how every member of the public, including members of this House, can help by taking simple steps to minimise the risk to themselves and their families, with up-to-date information available online through Gov.UK and trusted NHS channels such as NHS.UK. The Government also welcomes actions taken by social media companies to limit the spread of inaccurate information, including about Covid-19, on their platforms.

Chi Onwurah:

[1982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment the Government has made of levels of parental confidence in the online environment.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ofcom's 2019 report "Children and parents: media use and attitudes" indicates that three-quarters of parents of children who go online feel they know enough to keep their child safe online. However, parents' confidence in protecting their children online declines with the age of the child – from 81% of parents of children aged 5 to 7, to 74% of parents of children aged 12 to 15.

The Government is committed to supporting parents in preventing and dealing with online harm. The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. Ahead of legislation, the government will develop an online media literacy strategy. This strategy will ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to online media literacy education and awareness for children and parents.

Chi Onwurah:

[1983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle online advertising of unregulated products.

Caroline Dinenage:

Advertising in the UK is overseen by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the industry's independent regulator, which enforces the Advertising Codes. The Codes apply to all media, including broadcast and online. They incorporate all relevant legislation and set standards for accuracy and honesty to which advertisers must adhere, including specific conditions on misleading advertising, causing offence and social responsibility.

The ASA works with online platforms to have non-compliant advertising taken down, and with other partners to take action against those who are engaged in fraudulent advertising.

The ASA also works with other regulators, as appropriate, to ensure that regulation is joined-up and consistent. These include regulators with responsibility for regulated sectors, such as: the Gambling Commission, Financial Conduct Authority, Food Standards Agency, Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Phone-paid Services Authority and The Portman Group.

Last year the government announced its intention to review how online advertising is regulated in the UK. This programme of work is looking at how well the current regime is equipped to tackle the challenges posed by developments in online advertising in order to ensure that consumers have limited exposure to harmful or misleading advertising. A call for evidence on online advertising was published on 27 January.

Chi Onwurah:

[1989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for International Trade to increase UK-US digital trade.

Mr John Whittingdale:

DCMS and DIT officials are working closely together on preparing cutting-edge provisions for digital trade in a future UK-US free trade agreement. These provisions will maximise opportunities for facilitating digital trade across all sectors of the economy.

Chi Onwurah:

[1990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure citizens' data is not exploited.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government is committed to making sure we have high data protection standards. Under the UK's data protection regime, organisations have obligations to ensure that the personal data of individuals are processed fairly, lawfully and

transparently. This includes ensuring that only the required data is collected, that it is processed for a clear purpose and not kept for longer than is necessary. Individuals have the right to be kept informed of the collection and processing of their data and can also seek to access, erase or rectify their data or to object to its processing.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent body responsible for regulating and enforcing the DPA. The ICO has issued guidance for organisations on how to comply with the legislation and have published resources to inform individuals of their rights. If individuals have concerns about how an organisation is processing their personal data, they can refer these to the ICO.

EDUCATION

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[15021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department has allocated to schools in Suffolk in each year since 2009-10.

Nick Gibb:

The revenue funding allocated for schools for the financial years 2009-10 to 2018-19 for Suffolk local authority (LA) are shown in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	SUFFOLK LA (£ MILLIONS)
2009-10	420.9
2010-11	444.4
2011-12	448.2
2012-13	457.6
2013-14	483.2
2014-15	497.0
2015-16	514.8
2016-17	518.7
2017-18	529.2
2018-19	549.6

Helen Hayes:

[\[15164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February to Question 12382 on Schools: Repairs and Maintenance, how much and what proportion of

capital funding has been allocated to (a) retrofitting and (b) other energy efficiency measures since 2015.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 24 February 2020]: The Department has allocated over £7.4 billion in condition funding since 2015 to those responsible for school buildings. The majority of funding is allocated for local authorities, multi-academy trusts and schools to determine how it is invested in maintaining and improving their school buildings, including energy efficiency measures.

In addition, schools can apply for interest-free loans for energy efficiency projects through the Government backed Salix schemes. The Department administers Salix loans for academies and £20 million has been allocated since 2017. Maintained schools access Salix funding via their local authorities.

Helen Hayes:

[\[15165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding for the maintenance and improvements to school buildings ahead of the Spending Review.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 24 February 2020]: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, meets regularly with Cabinet colleagues to discuss a range of issues. He looks forward to working with the new Chancellor of the Exchequer in the run up to the Spending Review.

Like all departments, we are doing a great deal of preparatory work to understand what resources the education sector needs over the coming years.

We are committed to listening to the sector and working with HM Treasury to secure the funding required for education at the Spending Review.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[1993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 13528, what assessment he has made of the decision-making capacity of schools, colleges and universities on effective technology (a) procurement and (b) use.

Nick Gibb:

The Department knows that it can be difficult for teachers and leaders to make choices about the technology that will best meet their needs and those of their students. There is more to do to help schools realise the full benefits of technology to address teacher workload, increase efficiencies, meet the needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and ultimately help to promote positive outcomes for all young people.

The Department's Education Technology Strategy, 'Realising the potential of technology in education', published in April 2019, highlights several barriers to the effective use of technology in schools, colleges and universities and covers the

actions we are taking to help address them. The publication can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/realising-the-potential-of-technology-in-education>.

We are exploring the role of EdTech marketplaces, including supporting 'LendEd' – an online platform by the British Educational Suppliers Association that enables schools and colleges to compare products and try digital tools before buying them.

We launched a Testbed Programme to help schools and colleges understand the impact of technology and what works in their environment.

Our EdTech Demonstrators programme, launching in the Spring, will help schools and colleges who are proficient in their use of technology, to provide peer-to-peer support to others looking to improve.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Emily Thornberry:

[1202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on the recent protests in relation to that Government's proposed changes to citizenship laws.

Nigel Adams:

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

Emily Thornberry:

[1206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to help promote the merits of freedom of the press overseas.

Nigel Adams:

The British Government is fully committed to promote media freedom and protect journalists. We believe that media freedom is vital to functioning democracies and that journalists must be able to investigate and report without undue interference.

Alongside Canada, we hosted the first Global Conference on Media Freedom in London in July 2019. The former Foreign Secretary announced an international campaign to end the climate of impunity and mobilise a consensus behind the protection of journalists worldwide.

Our media freedom campaign initiatives are designed to add value to, and reinforce, existing mechanisms, including those of the UN and other international organisations. We have convened a Media Freedom Coalition: a partnership of 35 countries working to hold abusers to account. The first official level meeting of the Coalition took place in Geneva on 29 January. Working closely with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the UK has established a £3m Global Media Defence Fund to help protect journalists around the world. The UK works with media organisations and civil society around the world to deliver projects to protect and enable journalists. And, at the request of the UK and Canadian Governments, Lord Neuberger and Amal Clooney have convened an independent High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom. On the 13 February, the Panel released the first in a series of advisory reports that will provide recommendations to the Governments on how they can increase protections for the media.

UK Ministers and senior officials regularly raise concerns in multilateral fora, such as the UN Human Rights Council and the Council of Europe, about countries that do not comply with their human rights obligations. In addition, we use the UK's extensive diplomatic network to raise concerns about media freedom bilaterally. This includes individual cases where journalists and other media professionals are persecuted or attacked; or where governments are introducing laws and policies that could lead to restrictive practices.

Emily Thornberry:

[1207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to tackle the abuse of LGBT+ rights in Commonwealth countries.

Nigel Adams:

We continue to raise the importance of countering discrimination within the Commonwealth, including on grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation. Working through the UN Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and other multilateral fora, we regularly raise concerns about countries that do not comply with their human rights obligations and promote nondiscrimination against LGBT people. The UK was one of the founding members of the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC) a grouping of 42 like-minded countries working together with civil society to address violence and discrimination against LGBT individuals, and the ongoing criminalisation of same sex conduct in 70 countries.

The UK took over the role of ERC co-chair in June 2019, in partnership with Argentina and will host an international conference on LGBT rights in London on 27-29 May. The conference will address the issues of violence, discrimination and ongoing criminalisation and will set out how the ERC proposes to address those issues with the launch of a new ERC Strategy.

In her speech to the Commonwealth Forums in April 2018, the former Prime Minister set out the UK's readiness to support any member state wanting to reform outdated legislation that makes discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation possible and stressed the importance of our common value of equality, a

value that is clearly stated in the Commonwealth Charter. As part of that offer the UK announced a £5.6m programme working with civil society organisations to support those countries seeking to reform outdated discriminatory legislation affecting women, girls and LGBT individuals.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[1208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has received representations from his overseas counterparts in relation to the delay in the publication of the Intelligence and Security Committee report into alleged Russian electoral interference in UK politics.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary has not received representations from overseas counterparts on the publication of the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[1240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Cyprus on a pardon for the woman convicted of lying to police following allegations of rape in Ayia Napa on 17 July 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[15019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the statement made by Aung San Suu Kyi at the International Court of Justice regarding allegations of genocide against Rohingya Muslims.

Nigel Adams:

The Government acknowledges Aung San Suu Kyi's admission at The Hague that the military may have committed atrocities in Rakhine. At the same time, we were highly concerned by some significant omissions in her speech, including around the military's use of sexual violence against the Rohingya and other minorities. It is now vital that the perpetrators of human rights violations are brought to justice.

It is important that Myanmar continues to engage with the International Court of Justice and implements the provisional measures required. It is equally important that Myanmar now implements in full the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission and the domestic Independent Commission of Enquiry. This would be a clear demonstration of Myanmar's commitment to addressing the deep rooted problems in Rakhine State. We will continue to work with the democratically elected civilian government to help build a better future for all the people of Myanmar.

Emily Thornberry:

[15125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Trade to ensuring compliance with international law in relation to export licences for arms that could be used in the war in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The Government's position remains that until we retake our licensing decisions in line with the 2019 court judgment, we will not issue any new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners for possible use in the conflict in Yemen.

■ International Religious Freedom Alliance

Kenny MacAskill:

[696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to challenge International Religious Freedom Alliance members' approaches to (a) LGBT, (b) non-Christian and (c) women's rights.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is proud to be a member of the new Alliance, and joining reflects our ongoing commitment to working with other countries on Freedom of Religion or Belief. As a founding member of the Alliance, the UK will be able to shape its work in line with our Freedom of Religion or Belief for all policy, in which we defend the rights of members of all faiths, beliefs, and people of no belief. We will use our membership of the Alliance to enhance joined up working with like-minded countries, as well as to highlight the importance of considering the intersectionality of human rights. Our membership of the Alliance will not prevent the UK from continuing to raise specific concerns bilaterally with other states, including concerns about discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation.

■ Kashmir: Politics and Government

Naz Shah:

[14830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of (a) arrests of political leaders, (b) arrests of residents and (c) internet restrictions in Indian administered Kashmir; and what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on those reports.

Nigel Adams:

We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely. We welcome reports that some restrictions have been relaxed and some of the detained have been released. However, we remain concerned at the ongoing detentions and continued restrictions in some areas. We call for these to be lifted as soon as possible and we have raised our concerns with the Indian Government. Most recently, Lord Ahmad, the Minister for South Asia, discussed the situation in Kashmir and our concerns with Indian

Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs Mr Muraleedharan and, separately, the Indian High Commissioner. The British High Commission in New Delhi also regularly raise our concerns with the Indian Government at senior levels.

■ Overseas Aid

Chris Law: [14741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment the Government has undertaken on the effectiveness of the Integrated Activity Fund in meeting its objectives since the establishment of the fund.

James Cleverly:

The British Government monitors programmes and projects under the Integrated Activity Fund throughout the project life-cycle to ensure that they are on track to deliver expected outcomes.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Gareth Thomas: [1158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 24 October 2019 to Question 2644 on Northwick Park Hospital: Repairs and Maintenance, what the backlog of maintenance was for each acute hospital in 2018-19 reported to the NHS Estates Returns Information Collection; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Department collects data on backlog maintenance annually from National Health Service trusts through its Estates Returns Information Collection (ERIC) which is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/estates-returns-information-collection/england-2018-19>

The accuracy of the data is the responsibility of the contributing NHS organisations. In the 2018-19 ERIC publication there is site specific data on levels of backlog maintenance for 223 'general acute hospitals' and 33 'specialist hospitals (acute only)'. The levels of recorded backlog are attached.

Attachments:

1. PQ1158 Table [PQ1158 - Gareth Thomas - Backlog for Acute Hospitals Attachment - FINAL.docx]

Mr Kevan Jones: [1178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government plans to publish its response to the final report of the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983, published on 6 December 2018; and what the Government's timescale is for introducing a mental health Bill to reform that Act.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We plan to publish our White Paper in the next few months, which will set out the Government's response to Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983.

We will consult publicly on our proposals and we will bring forward a Bill to amend the Act when parliamentary time allows.

Daniel Kawczynski:[\[14983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will amend the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to make provision for Future Fit investment in Shropshire.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham to the answer I gave on 28 January 2020 to Question [5372](#).

Jeremy Hunt:[\[14985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that regulatory bodies for healthcare professionals issue guidance on (a) the duty of staff to report (i) patient safety and (ii) other concerns about clinical services and (b) the mechanism for reporting those concerns.

Helen Whately:

In March 2015, the Secretary of State for Health asked Sir Bruce Keogh to review the professional codes of doctors and nurses, and to ensure that the right incentives are in place to prevent health care professionals from covering up mistakes. On 16 July 2015, Sir Bruce confirmed that the professional codes of conduct for doctors and nurses are both fit for purpose.

All professional regulators are overseen by the Professional Standards Authority for health and social care (PSA). The PSA annually reviews each professional regulator's performance against the following four core functions: guidance and standards; education and training; registration; and fitness to practice.

Daniel Kawczynski:[\[14989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to assess the long-term efficiency savings of the Future Fit reconfiguration.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham to the answer I gave on 21 January 2020 to Question [2452](#).

Neil Coyle:[\[15005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what the date presumed consent for organ donation will be implemented.

Helen Whately:

The Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 heralds a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation in England, known as 'opt-out' or 'deemed consent'.

The new consent arrangements mean that all adults over 18 will be considered potential organ and tissue donors after death, unless they make a decision that they do not want to be a donor, they have nominated a representative to make a decision on their behalf after death or are in an excluded group.

The Government intends to implement the new system later this spring and is planning to announce the exact date shortly.

Fiona Bruce: [\[15006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many abortions took place after the diagnosis of vertical talus in each of the last 10 years; and at what weeks gestation those abortions took place.

Fiona Bruce: [\[15008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many abortions took place after the diagnosis of (a) cleft lip and (b) cleft palate in each of the last 10 years; and at what weeks gestation those abortions took place.

Helen Whately:

The number of legal abortions where cleft lip and cleft palate were mentioned as a medical condition on the HSA4 abortion form which took place in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years by week of gestation is attached. This data covers any mention of cleft lip and cleft palate on the HSA4 abortion form, as more than one medical condition may be specified. Information on abortions for vertical talus is not held in the format requested.

Attachments:

1. Number of legal abortions cleft lip and palate [Number of legal abortions table formatted.xlsx]

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[15025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase the availability of talking therapies in the NHS.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (2016) set out plans for expanding Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services so at least 1.5 million people can access care each year by 2020/21. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) commits to continuing increasing access to IAPT so at least 1.9 million people can access IAPT services by 2023/24.

Gareth Thomas: [\[1852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will hold discussions with the Royal College of GPs on introducing mandatory training on the menopause for trainee GPs; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The curricula for general practitioner (GP) Specialty Training are set by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and must meet the standards set by the General Medical Council (GMC) and be formally approved by them.

The RCGP Curriculum 'Being a General Practitioner', has recently been reviewed and a wide range of conditions are covered in the clinical topic guides. The curriculum is designed to integrate with the GMC's generic professional capabilities framework. The framework prioritises several themes, such as patient safety, quality improvement, safeguarding vulnerable groups, health promotion, leadership, team-working and other fundamental aspects of professional behaviour and practice.

The menopause is emphasized in the clinical topic guides that supplement the curriculum and is listed in the 'common and important conditions' section of the topic guide on gynaecology and breast health.

HOME OFFICE**Ms Marie Rimmer:**[\[15073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent the exploitation by county lines drug gangs of looked-after children placed out-of-borough.

Victoria Atkins:

County lines have a devastating impact on our communities, and we are determined to crack down on these gangs and put an end to the exploitation of vulnerable children.

The National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC), established with £3.6m of Home Office funding, has been vital to strengthening our response to this issue by enhancing the intelligence picture and enabling police forces to work together to tackle this complex, cross border threat. Since it became operational in September 2018 the NCLCC has coordinated four weeks of intensive law enforcement action resulting in over 2,500 arrests and over 3,000 individuals engaged for safeguarding.

The Home Office has also announced £25m of targeted investment across 2019/20 and 2020/21 to uplift the law enforcement response to county lines and increase the support available to children, young people and families that are affected.

In addition, the Government provides a range of support for county lines victims including: funding Young People's Advocates in Birmingham, Manchester and London to provide help and support for young people exploited through county lines, and funding through the £13m Trusted Relationships fund to help foster relationships between frontline professionals and young people at risk of exploitation including county lines.

The needs of the child are paramount when deciding the right care placement and Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient provision for their looked after children.

Lack of sufficient placements to meet young people's needs can lead to children being placed out of area. The Government is helping to improve commissioning of placements, including providing funding through the Department for Education's £200 million children's social care Innovation Programme.

Steve Double:

[15121]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of British National (Overseas) passport holders who (a) applied for asylum in the UK and (b) were successfully granted (i) refugee or (ii) humanitarian protection status between 2015 and 2019.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications, initial decisions and resettlement in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Data on the number of asylum applications from British National (Overseas), and the initial decisions of such applications are published in tables Asy_D01 and Asy_D02 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets>

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

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest'

Caroline Nokes:

[15142]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will extend the visas of Chinese students unable to return to China as a result of flight cancellations due to the coronavirus outbreak in that country.

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.

Martyn Day:

[15147]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU nationals reside in (a) Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency and (b) Scotland; and what proportion of those EU nationals have been granted settled status.

Martyn Day:

[15148]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department holds information on the number of vulnerable adults in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency who are (a) eligible for settled status and (b) have applied successfully for settled status.

Kevin Foster:

The latest published information shows that more than 3.1 million (3,107,900) EU Settlement Scheme applications had been received up to 31 January 2020. In the same period 2.7 million (2,730,200) applications had been concluded of which 58% were granted settled status. The latest figures can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme monthly statistics' available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics-january-2020>

Published information on EU Settlement Scheme conclusions by region and local authority to 31 December 2019, can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics', local authority statistics tables, table EUSS_LA_03, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2019>

In addition, the available published information on EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications and concluded applications by the applicant's age and nationality to 31 December 2019, can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics', statistics tables, tables EUSS_01, EUSS_02 and EUSS_04, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2019>.

The Home Office has put in place a comprehensive vulnerability strategy to ensure the EU Settlement Scheme is accessible for all. We are working in partnership with vulnerable group representatives, local authorities and other experts to understand user needs and to ensure the right support arrangements are in place for applicants, including those with disabilities.

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

The Home Office has developed a community toolkit which includes communications materials and specific guidance on the EU Settlement Scheme for local authorities to download to help support individuals. The Settlement Resolution Centre provides help and information to individuals completing their EU Settlement Scheme application and can also be contact-ed via e-mail.

An Assisted Digital service is available for those who do not have the skills, access or confidence to complete the online form.

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

Dr Rupa Huq:

[1937]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Women of 11 July 2019, Official Report, column 439, what recent steps she has taken to keep under review the merits of proposals for buffer zones around all family planning clinics.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is clear that it is unacceptable that patients seeking healthcare advice or staff working in healthcare facilities should feel intimidated or harassed. This country has a proud history of allowing free speech, but the right to peaceful protest does not extend to harassment or intimidating behaviour and the law currently provides protection against such acts.

The Home Office takes the matter of protesters outside abortion clinics extremely seriously.

The Government recognises the adverse impact that anti-abortion protests can have on patients and staff, and the Home Office is keeping this important matter under review.

My officials regularly liaise with national policing leads to assess if there have been any developments on protest activities outside abortion clinics. The Home Office would welcome any new evidence that becomes available on this important issue.

Derek Thomas:

[1943]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers are suspended pending investigation; how many of those investigations have taken longer than 12 months to resolve; and what steps her Department is taking to improve the time taken to reach a resolution for such investigations.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold information on how many police officers are suspended pending investigation or how many investigations where an officer has been suspended have taken longer than 12 months to complete.

The chief officer of a police force has the discretion to suspend an officer during an investigation, depending on the circumstances of the case.

The average investigation by police forces into complaints took 158 days (2018/19) – a fall from 173 days the previous year. Since the launch of the Independent Office for Police Conduct in January 2018, the IOPC has completed 93% of its investigations in under 12 months.

On 1 February 2020 the Government implemented reforms to improve the efficiency, accountability and proportionality of the police discipline system. The reforms require greater transparency by placing a duty on the IOPC or the police to provide a clear explanation should an investigation go beyond 12 months.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[1984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has with representatives of the online retail sector on the sale of poisons which require a licence under the Control of Poisons and Explosives Precursors Regulations 2015.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[1985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been prosecuted under the Poisons Act 1972 in each year since 2015.

James Brokenshire:

As well as direct and tailored advice offered to individual businesses, the Home Office has published guidance for suppliers to assist them in their legal obligations in respect of poisons and explosive precursors. This includes advice on how to sell licensed products online, how to secure their chemicals, and advice on how to verify the professional or trade status of a prospective customer. The latter is not made available publicly as some of the detail may assist individuals in evading control measures.

The Home Office has a team of embedded police officers to engage with companies and provide advice. The team also assess controls, including through test purchases, to check the robustness of the regime. Where problems are found the team engage and seek to improve compliance.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of the number of prosecutions of defendants charged with offences under the Poisons Act 1972. This information could only be obtained by a manual examination of CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

While the CPS does not collect data on defendants prosecuted by specific offence or the outcome of any prosecution, information is available for the number of offences under the Act in which a prosecution commenced at magistrates' courts.

The table below shows the number of these offences recorded on the CPS's Case Management System in each financial year over the last ten years.

It should be noted that the figures relate to the number of offences and not the number of individual defendants. It is often the case that an individual defendant is charged with more than one offence against the same victim.

			2018	
			-	
2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2019	
Poisons Act 1972	0	1	1	3

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

Jane Hunt:

[2008]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with (a) the police and (b) other stakeholders on introducing further measures to tackle drug driving.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has established a project team, consisting of Department for Transport, Home Office and the National Police Chiefs Council to take stock of how the police and other agencies currently carry out road traffic enforcement and understanding what can be done better to tackle road crime including tackling drug driving.

We are gathering evidence on the current position for roads policing enforcement and will look to pilot initiatives this year and will consider next steps when the review concludes.

Kenny MacAskil:

[2017]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria is used in deciding the rate to be paid to local authorities for the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Kevin Foster:

We recognise local authorities undertake incredibly valuable work in looking after vulnerable young asylum seekers and the Home Office is committed to supporting this.

The Home Office provides funding to local authorities as a contribution to the costs they incur when supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), which is in addition to the money provided through the local government finance settlement.

The UASC funding review gathered evidence from over 50 local authorities and concluded in May 2019 with a significant increase in the funding: from 1 April 2019, local authorities now receive £114 per UASC per night for each UASC in their care, regardless of their age or when they entered the UK. This represents a 61% increase

to the lowest rate that was previously paid. As well as providing a greater contribution to local authorities support costs, these changes addressed feedback from the review that the previous rate structure was overly complex.

Further consideration is being given to funding rates for local authorities supporting UASC and former UASC care leavers.

Duncan Baker:

[2018]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the 20,000 new police officers she plans to allocate to North Norfolk; and what her Department's timescale is for deploying additional police officers to North Norfolk.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is delivering on the people's priorities by recruiting 20,000 additional police officers over the next three years.

Norfolk Police has been allocated 67 officers in year one of the uplift, to be recruited by the end of March 2021. This is supported by an increase of up to £11.4m in 2020/21. Decisions on the allocation of officers for years two and three are yet to be taken.

Decisions on the deployment of officers within a force area are operational decisions for Chief Constables.

Apsana Begum:

[2036]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what is the timeframe is for the publication of the Windrush Lessons Learned review.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary has not yet received the final report from the independent reviewer Wendy Williams. On receipt it will be published as soon as practicable.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Philip Davies:

[1226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of (a) the Towns Fund and (b) other measures in revitalising high streets.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Through the £3.6 billion Towns Fund, we are working with 100 towns to agree proposals that will invest up to £25 million in each place. Partners from the private and public sector in each of the areas for the towns selected have already come together to develop a Town Deal Board that will be the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town is defined. The Government recognise the importance of putting in place robust monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure

we can measure the effectiveness of these interventions and will publish further guidance in due course.

This Government has also brought forward a number of initiatives to support our high streets, including our £1 billion Future High Streets Fund, the new pilots being run by the High Streets Task Force, Great British High Street Awards, and increasing small business rates relief from one third to 50 per cent.

Ms Marie Rimmer:

[15074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to allocate additional (a) powers and (b) resources to councils for the purchase of brownfield sites to help those councils meet housing targets.

Christopher Pincher:

Local authorities already have compulsory purchase powers which they can use to acquire land, including for the delivery of new housing. In recent years, we have taken forward wide ranging reforms to improve the compulsory purchase process. We are keen to encourage local authorities to make more effective use of these powers and we will continue to explore ways of supporting them in doing so.

Alex Sobel:

[15087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the environment of reopening Woodhouse colliery in Cumbria.

Christopher Pincher:

None. The planning decision on the Woodhouse colliery was a decision for the local planning authority. It will have been a matter for them to make the appropriate environmental assessment in coming to a decision.

Derek Thomas:

[1947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the (a) potential merits of making local authorities economically liable for negligence in the exercise of their building control functions and (b) effectiveness of the exercise by those authorities of those functions.

Christopher Pincher:

As part of our reforms to building safety, we are establishing a new Building Safety Regulator which will provide enhanced oversight of the building safety regulatory system.

Building work is subject to building control either by the local authority or a private approved inspector. It is the responsibility of the building control body to take all reasonable steps to assess compliance. However, building control is a spot checking process at certain points during the building work.

A compliance certificate issued by a local authorities building control team is not an absolute guarantee of compliance and in no way removes the responsibility of compliance from the builder or installer.

If it is considered that the local authority building control team did not carry out its function properly or was negligent in the exercise of its building control functions, a complaint could be made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), the website for which is <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>.

The LGSCO is a free and impartial service to the general public, which is independent of the Government. Considering that it investigates complaints about local governments along with other authorities and organisations, it is paramount that its decisions cannot be influenced by the Government. As always, it is also possible to apply to the High Court for a judicial review to challenge an Ombudsman's decision should it be considered to be legally flawed.

Alberto Costa:

[1952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to review the adequacy of local land charges placed on new housing developments.

Christopher Pincher:

My Department has no plans to review local land charges placed on new housing developments, or more widely. HM Land Registry is working in partnership with local authorities in England to standardise and migrate local land charge data to a single register. Further information on the Programme can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-land-registry-local-land-charges-programme>

Apsana Begum:

[2026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the Government's timescale is for ensuring that all high-rise residential buildings identified with ACM cladding have had that cladding removed and replaced.

Christopher Pincher:

It is the Government's priority to ensure that unsafe ACM cladding is removed and replaced swiftly from high rise residential buildings, and at no cost to leaseholders. The £600 million which the Government has committed to remediate high-rise residential buildings with unsafe ACM cladding removes the biggest blocker to pace of remediation.

The Department has regular engagement with a named contact from each building to ensure progress with remediation is being made. Building owners who have not already taken action, must do so now. Further delay is not acceptable. Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress, those responsible should expect further action to be taken – including naming and shaming and enforcement.

Apsana Begum:

[2027]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of sprinkler systems in improving fire safety in tower blocks.

Christopher Pincher:

Research by the Building Research Establishment into the effectiveness of residential sprinklers estimates a reduction in deaths and injuries at 76 per cent and 58 per cent respectively. The Secretary of State's statement on building safety on 20 January 2020 set out that we are considering lowering the height threshold for sprinkler requirements in new buildings to 11 metres.

James Murray:[\[2033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the October 2019 consultation on the Future Homes Standard, whether proposals to restrict local planning authorities from setting energy efficiency standards for new homes higher than those required by national Building Regulations would restrict the Mayor of London from introducing policies in new London Plans that require on-site carbon reductions from major residential developments beyond the baseline of part L of Building Regulations.

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. We are consulting on an ambitious set of changes proposing minimum standards for building fabric that are higher than ever, which means there may no longer be a need for local planning authorities to set higher standards. Although I cannot comment on the specifics of the London Plan during its 'Intention to Publish' stage, I will carefully consider the Mayor of London's response to my Department's consultation alongside other responses received.

Tom Hunt:[\[2059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to extend the community housing fund for five years.

Christopher Pincher:

The Community Housing Fund provides the principal source of Government support for the community-led housebuilding sector. The Fund is delivered outside London by Homes England and within London by the Greater London Authority. Capital and revenue grants are available to community-based groups wishing to take forward schemes to build locally affordable housing.

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.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Mrs Pauline Latham:****[14999]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment the Department has made of the prevalence of FGM abroad; and what assessment he has made of the trends in the level of FGM in each of the 20 years..

Wendy Morton:

The exact number of girls and women worldwide who have undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) remains unknown, however, UNICEF estimates that at least 200 million have been cut in more than 31 countries. Most of these countries are in Africa, parts of the Middle East and Asia. Prevalence varies hugely across these countries, from less than one percent to almost universal. Today, a girl is about one-third less likely to be cut than 30 years ago. But global efforts need to go further and faster if we are to meet the Global Goal to end FGM by 2030. At current rates, 68 million girls are at risk of being cut in the next decade. The UK is leading change in partnership with the Africa-led movement to end FGM, providing £50 million of support over the next five years. UK aid has already helped 10,000 communities, representing over 27 million people, pledge to abandon FGM.

Mrs Pauline Latham:**[15000]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment his Department has made of the benefits of supporting developing countries to criminalise FGM.

Wendy Morton:

Female Genital Mutilation is a human rights abuse and an extreme form of gender discrimination. Criminalising FGM and properly enforcing the law is key to ending the practice. The UK has already supported The Gambia, Nigeria, and Mauritania to make FGM illegal. DFID recently allocated £2.5 million to the UN, to work with governments to enforce laws in countries where FGM is already illegal but continues to be practised. Evidence shows that legal change is a critical step towards changing attitudes towards FGM. But this must be part of a multi-pronged approach with community-led change at its heart. The UK supports the Africa-led Movement to end FGM, which works at several levels, including by empowering grassroots activists to hold their governments to account.

Tulip Siddiq:**[652]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment his Department monitors the cash held by its subsidiaries in offshore bank accounts; and how frequently his subsidiaries report those balances to his Department.

James Duddridge:

DFID does not have any subsidiaries.

To enable greater transparency in and to identify our flow of funds, programme delivery chains are mapped out to identify and capture the names of all partners involved in delivering a specific good, service or change, down to the end beneficiary is completed. In addition to this delivery partners are required to publish data to the IATI standard on all its DFID funding.

■ Developing Countries: Water

Fleur Anderson: [\[14832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to (a) water, (b) sanitation and (c) hygiene in developing countries.

Wendy Morton:

Since 2015, DFID has helped over 51 million poor people in Africa and Asia get access to a drinking water supply or toilet for the first time. Over 64 million people gained access to water, sanitation or hygiene services between 2011 and 2015.

We plan to deliver more sustainable and scalable water and sanitation programming by increasing our focus on strengthening national systems to deliver services, as part of the UK's commitment to end preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children by 2030.

■ Leprosy

Fiona Bruce: [\[14693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if he will appoint a Government champion to bring about the end of leprosy.

Wendy Morton:

A key aim of the UK's global health work is to support countries to build and maintain strong health systems, achieve universal health coverage, and to tackle all causes of ill health - working in close partnership with national governments. In September 2019 the UK's flagship £220 million neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) programme was launched, which will provide treatment and care for NTDs to 200 million people. We have no current plans to appoint government champions on specific NTDs such as leprosy.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Kerry McCarthy: [\[1199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what meetings officials in her Department have had with representatives of (a) the US Administration, (b) the Australian Government and (c) EU27 nations about maintaining UK standards on (i) animal welfare, (ii) environmental and (iii) food safety in any Free Trade Agreements.

Greg Hands:

UK officials continue to engage with US and Australian officials in preparation for the launch of negotiations and to help build a shared understanding of our countries' approaches and ambitions for their future bilateral trade and investment relationship.

In their interactions with EU27 officials, UK officials have reiterated that while laws and regulations may diverge from those of the EU, the Government will uphold the UK's high regulatory standards.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[1200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what dates have been set for trade negotiations with (a) the USA, (b) Australia (c) New Zealand and (d) Trans-pacific partnership.

Greg Hands:

Now that we have left the EU, the UK will be able to negotiate, sign and ratify new free trade agreements. We are working to begin formal negotiations with key partners, including the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, as swiftly as possible. We will also seek accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Christian Matheson:[\[1955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he has taken to help ensure (a) UK supermarkets and (b) Oxfam shops have continued access to imported Palestinian agricultural products.

Conor Burns:

The UK Government is concerned about the impact of recent Israeli trade restrictions. UK businesses should be free to import Palestinian products without barriers. Her Majesty's Ambassador to Israel raised this issue with the Government of Israel, most recently on 12 February. We welcome the agreement reached by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, on 20 February, to lift their respective trade restrictions. We urge both sides to ensure the swift implementation of this agreement.

JUSTICE**Philip Davies:**[\[1214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving a custodial sentence work outside prison.

Lucy Frazer:

Between October 2018 and September 2019, 3,858 separate individuals serving a custodial sentence had at least one incidence of 'Work Related' release on temporary licence.

All offenders must meet strict criteria and pass a thorough risk assessment before being considered for release on temporary licence (ROTL). Research published in 2018 indicates that ROTL helps to reduce re-offending. It helps offenders to build and maintain family ties and find work, which are a critical aspect of reducing the £18 billion annual cost to the taxpayer of reoffending.

Philip Davies: [1216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much was spent by HM Prisons (a) Leeds and (b) Wakefield on calculating the release date of prisoners in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many people are employed by each of those prisons to carry out those calculations.

Lucy Frazer:

The calculation of release dates for prisoners forms part of the overall role of a number of Offender Management Unit (OMU) prison staff. These staffing costs are not collated or broken down separately by function and, as a result, it is not possible to provide the figures requested.

Philip Davies: [1219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the names are of all prisoners who have absconded from prison and currently not been returned; and if he will specify in each such case (a) the offence each absconder originally committed and (b) the length of custodial sentence they were serving when they absconded.

Lucy Frazer:

Prisoners are classed as 'absconders' if they absent themselves from Prison Service custody without lawful authority and without having to overcome a physical security barrier such as a secure perimeter fence or by security escort staff.

Data on absconders who were still at large was published in July 2019 and can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820252/01_Escapes_Absconds.xlsx

This shows that between April 2018 and March 2019 there are seven absconders known to have not been recaptured. We are not able to release the prisoner's names as this is personal data, however please see their offence group and length of sentence served.

OFFENDER	OFFENCE GROUP	LENGTH OF SENTENCE SERVED
1	04 Theft Offences	54 months
2	01 Violence against the person IPP	
3	01 Violence against the person 45 months	
4	01 Violence against the person 13 years	

OFFENDER	OFFENCE GROUP	LENGTH OF SENTENCE SERVED
5	03 Robbery	Life
6	04 Theft Offences	IPP
7	01 Violence against the person	3 years

Public protection is our top priority. When a prisoner absconds, police are immediately notified and are responsible for locating the offender, with most absconders quickly recaptured and returned to custody.

Those who are recaptured face serious consequences, including being returned to closed prison conditions where they may serve up to two additional years on conviction. Prisoners subject to parole decisions will likely face even longer delays to their release.

Prisoners must be individually risk assessed and only those who are assessed as low risk and trustworthy and who are generally within two years of release may be categorised for open conditions. Those with an indeterminate sentence generally must have a recommendation from the Parole Board for allocation to open prison.

Philip Davies:

[\[1220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the ratio of prison officers to inmates in prisons in England and Wales was, by category of prison in each of the last five years.

Lucy Frazer:

The table below sets out the overall ratios of total prison officers to prisoners by category of prison for the past 5 years (for public sector prisons).

The table demonstrates a positive trend, with increasingly more prison officers to prisoners over time. We have invested significantly in increasing staff numbers, recruiting an additional 4,581 (full time equivalent) prison officers between October 2016 and September 2019, surpassing our original target of 2,500.

During periods of prisoner unlock, the minimum number of staff on each residential unit is determined by 'Safe, Decent and Secure Operating Levels' (SDSOLs) which are agreed in each establishment. Several factors influence SDSOLs such as design and size of a residential unit, specialist functions or prisoner cohort.

Table 1 - Ratio of Band 3 to 5 prison officers ¹ to prisoners in public sector prisons, by category of prison ^{2,3}, as at 30th June for years 2015 to 2019

	30 Jun 2015	30 Jun 2016	30 Jun 2017	30 Jun 2018	30 Jun 2019
Cluster	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.0	3.6

Female closed	2.4	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.6
Female local	2.8	2.3	2.9	2.3	2.3
Female open	4.2	3.9	3.4	3.4	3.1
Immigration Removal Centre	2.4	1.4	3.3	2.2	1.9
Male category B	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.1
Male category C	5.0	5.0	4.7	3.8	3.9
Male closed YOI	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.1	2.9
Male dispersal	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.6
Male local	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.0	2.8
Male open	7.5	8.0	8.3	7.9	8.3
Male open YOI ⁴	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
Male YOI category C trainer ⁴	1.5	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.0
Male YOI (ages 15-21) ⁴	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.8
Male YOI (ages 15-17) ⁴	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.1
Total	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.2	3.1

NOTES

Includes Band 3-4/ prison officers (including specialists), Band 4/ supervising officers and Band 5/ custodial managers. Only staff working in Prison and Youth Custody Service (YCS) establishments are included, and those working in HQ or other areas are excluded. Establishments are allocated to a category as it was at the latest date rather than the category as it was at the specific snapshot point of the table. Where an establishment holds different categories of prisoner it is not possible to disaggregate the staffing. All staff are allocated to the primary category of the establishment. YOIs under the YCS category are responsible for young people aged 10-17 years (although some individuals may turn 18 whilst in these establishments but may not move to the adult estate if they are very close to the end of their sentence) with the exception of Feltham which also holds young adults up to 21 years of age.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[14772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce costs across the prison estate.

Lucy Frazer:

I refer the Hon. Member to my previous response given to PQ 3793 on 30 October 2019.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[15026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce rates of substance dependency in the prison population.

Lucy Frazer:

NHS England/Improvement (NHSE/I) are responsible for commissioning and delivering healthcare, including substance misuse services, in prisons. The Ministry of Justice works closely with our health and justice partners (Department for Health and Social Care, NHSE/I, HM Prison and Probation Service and Public Health England) to deliver safe, decent, effective healthcare for offenders through the National Partnership Agreement for Prison Healthcare in England, published in April 2018.

Last year we published 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 to reduce drug misuse and dependency.

We are also testing and evaluating innovative approaches to substance misuse through our £9 million Drug Recovery Prison pilot at HMP Holme House. This is a joint MoJ and NHS E/I project to tackle drugs in prison and help prisoners improve their chance of recovery.

Jane Hunt:

[2007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to help reduce rates of prisoner re-offending.

Lucy Frazer:

This Government is committed to reducing reoffending by ensuring that all offenders have the tools they need to turn their backs on crime. The current proven reoffending rate is 28.7%.

We know that offenders typically have needs in a range of areas, such as education, employment, accommodation and family relationships. Many of these needs drive offending and the prison and probation system provides an opportunity to address them.

We have recently overhauled the prison education system, giving governors more control over the education budget for their establishments, and have implemented two new prison education frameworks. Additionally, the new Prison Education

Service will build on this by improving the range of training available to prisoners which is directly linked to real jobs on release. We are also engaging with employers to take on ex-prisoners via the New Futures Network (NFN) and in May 2019 we introduced reforms to increase the opportunities available to prisoners to gain experience in real workplaces through Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL).

We are investing up to £6.4m in an accommodation pilot scheme to support individuals released from three prisons: Bristol, Leeds and Pentonville. Services have now commenced in all three areas, with the first individuals now being supported into accommodation following release.

We are also making positive progress in implementing the recommendations as set out by Lord Farmer's review on the importance of family engagement to reduce reoffending and we have delivered 13 out of the 19 recommendations to date.

Although much is being done to reduce reoffending, this remains a complex issue that requires a combined effort across government and local partners in order to support ex-offenders when they are released.

Daisy Cooper:

[2054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress he has made on the development of a pilot of residential women's centres in at least five sites across England and Wales.

Lucy Frazer:

The Female Offender Strategy committed to develop a 'residential women's centre' pilot in at least five sites across England and Wales.

We believe that these models could improve outcomes for female offenders and reduce the number of women entering and re-entering custody on short custodial sentences. We have concluded our first phase of consultation with stakeholders, partners and providers to inform our scoping.

We are considering how best to take this project forward.

Daisy Cooper:

[2055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress he has made on reducing the number of women serving short custodial sentences.

Lucy Frazer:

In June 2018, the Government published the Female Offender Strategy which set out an aim to see fewer women in custody, especially on short term sentences. There is persuasive evidence that many women, particularly on short custodial sentences, can be better supported in the community on robust and effective community sentences.

There has been a £5.1m investment in community provision for women in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The best available evidence suggests that in order to reduce reoffending and keep women safe, we should invest in gender-specific, trauma-informed interventions that take into account all areas related to a women's offending. HM Prison and Probation

Service has developed a Pre-Sentence Report interview checklist which focuses on the specific needs of female offenders. Following a series of briefing events, this was rolled out nationally in August 2019 and is available to all practitioners.

It is essential that the public and judiciary have confidence in effective community orders, including those which address offenders' behaviour, answer their mental health and alcohol or drug misuse needs, or provide reparation for the benefit of the wider community. Through the Community Sentence Treatment Requirement (CSTR) Programme, health and justice partners are working together to improve access to timely and appropriate mental health and substance misuse services for the offenders who need them. The Programme is currently operating in courts across nine areas in England. A number of further sites are expecting to go live in 2020.

We are also working with the police and other partners to support the use of Out of Court Disposals - involving community resolution and conditional cautions - in appropriate cases of low level offending. This includes work to improve the use of police guidance we have published on working with vulnerable women, helping police forces to divert women where appropriate to support and away from crime.

The Strategy is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-offender-strategy>.

Daisy Cooper:

[2056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Written Statement of 27 June 2019, Female Offender Strategy - First Anniversary, HCWS1662, whether the new checklist for Pre-Sentence Reports on women referred to in that statement has been rolled out nationally.

Lucy Frazer:

HM Prison and Probation Service has developed a Pre-Sentence Report interview checklist which focuses on the specific needs of female offenders. Following a series of briefing events, this was rolled out nationally in August 2019 and is available to all practitioners.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[900827]

What assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for Women's Centres.

Lucy Frazer:

We are aware of the challenges that women's community services, including women's centres, face in securing stable funding. Sustainable community provision that provides specialist support for vulnerable women is essential to delivering the Female Offender Strategy.

Since the publication of the Strategy in June 2018, we have invested £5.1 million funding in women's services across England and Wales. With my officials, I am reviewing progress on delivering the Strategy 20 months on from its publication. This will include looking at the question of funding.

James Sunderland:

[\[900828\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to ensure legal aid is accessible to people that need it.

Alex Chalk:

Last year, the Legal Aid Agency spent around £1.7bn on legal aid for those who need it – this government is committed to maintaining access to justice. Wider than legal aid, we are enhancing the support on offer to litigants in person by providing a further £3m of funding and investing up to £5m in a Legal Support Innovation Fund.

In addition, we are making a number of changes to legal aid. This includes undertaking a comprehensive review of the means test, improving and simplifying the exceptional case funding scheme, making face-to-face advice more readily available in a number of civil matters, and undertaking an awareness campaign for legal aid and legal support.

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[900829\]](#)

If he will commission an independent inquiry into the physical and sexual abuse at Medomsley Detention Centre.

Lucy Frazer:

This is a highly emotive issue and I understand how difficult it must be for the survivors of abuse and their families.

These matters remain the subject of a criminal investigation and legal action in the civil courts. Therefore, it would be inappropriate at present to commission an inquiry.

Dr James Davies:

[\[900832\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the effect of delays in the (a) charging and (b) requisitioning of suspects on the outcome of subsequent court cases.

Chris Philp:

The government has committed to recruiting 20,000 more police officers, investing £85 million in the CPS and doubled funding for support services to support victims of the most harmful crimes through the criminal justice process. I also welcome the announcement made by the Homes Secretary that the Government will review the use of pre-charge bail.

We're also working across the CJS to help agencies join up and make processes more effective and efficient.

Lucy Allan:

[\[900833\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure that victims of child sexual exploitation have confidence in the criminal justice system.

Alex Chalk:

Child sexual exploitation is an abhorrent crime and it is essential that specialist support is available to help victims of abuse through the criminal justice system to ensure victims have confidence to come forward. Independent Sexual Violence

Advisors provide an important link between support services and criminal justice agencies and may support a victim when attending court and giving evidence. This is why we are investing an additional £1m in recruiting more.

There are a range of special measures to help victims give their best evidence, for example from behind a screen or remotely. A Victim Personal Statement gives victims a voice in the criminal justice process by helping others to understand how the crime has affected them.

We're also determined to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice, which is why we're recruiting 20,000 more police officers, investing £85m in more prosecutors and building 10,000 extra prison places.

Jessica Morden:

[900835]

What assessment he has made of trends in waiting times for Child Maintenance Service appeals.

Chris Philp:

I accept that waiting times for Child Maintenance Service appeals remain higher than we would like. I am pleased to say that we are working on measures to help reduce waiting times for those appealing to the Social Security and Child Support jurisdiction.

We have recruited three more judges who will be able to hear Child Maintenance appeals in Wales, two of which will be available to sit at the Langstone tribunal venue in Newport. Furthermore, we are spending £1.2 billion on modernising the courts and tribunals system with a view to improving the experience of service users. 129 fee paid judges have been recruited to the SSCS jurisdiction in 2019, which will also greatly assist.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Low Incomes

Ian Byrne:

[617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what funding his Department has allocated to ensure access to free legal support for people on low incomes in (a) Liverpool West Derby constituency and (b) the UK.

Alex Chalk:

The Lord Chancellor has a duty to ensure that legal aid is made available in accordance with the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (2012) and last year the Government spent £1.7bn on legal aid.

Legal aid can help meet the costs of legal advice, family mediation and representation in a court or tribunal. Legal Aid is not allocated by constituency but is available for cases where the relevant criteria, such as the financial eligibility of the applicant and/or the degree of legal merit in their case, is met, where applicable. Legal aid may not always be 'free', for instance where contributions are required towards the overall subsidised costs depending on the means of the applicant, or where this must be paid back, such as upon conviction in criminal matters, or where assets are recovered in civil proceedings.

Alongside this, in February 2019 the Ministry of Justice published the Legal Support Action Plan which outlines how the Government aims to improve the breadth of support on offer to people when they experience legal problems. As part of this, a series of pilots will be launched to test early forms of intervention that stop people's problems from escalating and becoming more complex. This includes an investment of up to £5m into a Legal Support Innovation Fund to explore the role technology can play in helping people identify and resolve their legal issues, and we are enhancing the support on offer to litigants in person by providing a further £3m of funding over the next two years, ensuring that those representing themselves in court understand the process and are better supported through it. Many of the measures announced in the action plan will help people, including those on low incomes, access free legal support.

Access to justice is a fundamental right and the Government is committed to ensuring that everyone can get the support they need to access the justice system across England and Wales.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Gavin Robinson:

[\[656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 10 Feb 2020 to Question 13025 on Life Imprisonment, for what reasons the number of life prisoners licences revoked under section 9 of the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001 between 2001 and 2010 was not provided; and whether any licences have been revoked under Article 7 of Schedule 5 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010.

Mr Robin Walker:

[Holding answer 24 February 2020]: We do not hold the information requested. As noted in the answer of 10 February 2020, the recall of individuals released on a life licence is primarily a matter for the Department of Justice (DoJ), who hold all the information requested, including data dated before 2010.

TRANSPORT

Andy McDonald:

[\[14990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the provisions for the procurement of rolling stock for High Speed two will encourage UK-based train manufacturing and benefit small and medium-sized enterprises across the UK rail supply chain.

Andrew Stephenson:

The procurement of rolling stock for High Speed 2 requires Tenderers to submit a statement (their "Legacy Statement") which will outline how the Tenderer's proposal will add value to the UK economy, and how they will contribute to the delivery of the HS2 Programme Benefits. The Legacy Statement does not form any part of the evaluation of Tenders. HS2 Ltd will only open the Legacy Statement of the Tenderer selected for Contract Award.

Mr Stephen Morgan:[\[15108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Portsmouth International Port will be required to process an with increased number of border checks after the end of the transition period.

Mr Stephen Morgan:[\[15122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of Portsmouth International Port's capacity to respond to an deal with a potentially increased workload after the 31 December 2020 with its current staffing levels.

Mr Stephen Morgan:[\[15123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has he made of adequacy of resources at Portsmouth International Port to respond to the increase in customs regulations after the transition period.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has confirmed that it plans to introduce full import controls on EU goods at the border after the transition period ends on 31 December 2020. That will involve the need for customs declarations and will mean that goods are newly subject to checks.

HMG will be engaging with ports, airports and other stakeholders at key border locations to understand local constraints and opportunities and how best to support planning for operational readiness.

Richard Fuller:[\[15128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list the accessibility improvements that have been made to train stations in (a) the East of England and (b) Bedfordshire in each of the last five years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In Control Period 5 (2014-2019), the Access for All programme delivered step free routes at 6 stations in the East of England, including Leighton Buzzard. In Control Period 6 (2019-2024) 8 of the 73 stations due to benefit from Access for All funding are in the East, including Luton and Biggleswade.

This is in addition to access improvements delivered as part of other major projects, and by the industry itself, which must meet current accessibility standards whenever it installs, replaces or renews station infrastructure.

Details of all of this work is held by the individual organisations and the information on the facilities available at stations is collected and held by the Rail Delivery Group, who you can contact using info@raildeliverygroup.com.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18861\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when the Government plans to publish its response to the consultation on Reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, published in July 2018.

Elizabeth Truss:

Any changes to the Gender Recognition Act must be carefully planned. We will take into account the need to protect single sex spaces for women and girls, and also that adults who decide they are transgender are free to live their lives as they wish. We will publish our response to the consultation once our next steps have been agreed.

■ Government Equalities Office: Work Experience

Seema Malhotra:

[\[711\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how many people aged (a) 16 and under and (b) over 16 years old undertook work experience in the Government Equalities Office in each of the last three years.

Elizabeth Truss:

Work experience is considered to be any paid five-day or more placement in a government department.

The Civil Service aims to increase opportunities for people of all backgrounds and create a Civil Service fit for 21st century Britain through work experience, internships and apprenticeship schemes.

For people aged 16 and under there was the following number of work experience placements in the Government Equalities Office:

2017: 0

2018: 0

2019: 0

For people over 16 years old there was the following number of work experience placements in the Government Equalities Office:

2017: 0

2018: 2

2019: 2

WORK AND PENSIONS**Rosie Cooper:****[1232]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Age UK's briefing entitled Poverty in later life, published September 2019, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the rise in pensioner poverty.

Guy Opperman:

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 been just up-rated by earnings, since April 2010. From April 2020, the Standard Minimum Guarantee in Pension Credit will increase by average earnings. This is the equivalent of over £2,100 per year higher in cash terms for single people, and over £3,200 per year higher in cash terms for couples than it was in 2010.

The Government is committed to action that helps to alleviate levels of pensioner poverty. 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, and in 2019/20 the Government will spend around £100 billion on the State Pension.

1.6 million people are already claiming around £5.4 billion in Pension Credit. The Government wants to make sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are entitled. That is why on the 10 February 2020 we launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit and encourage those over State Pension age to check whether they are eligible.

To assist customers to prepare for retirement, the Government has introduced a number of initiatives including the launch of the online mid-life MOT page <https://www.yourpension.gov.uk/mid-life-mot/> which provides guidance on how to obtain the right information to plan for retirement.

The employer led strategy on fuller working lives https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587654/fuller-working-lives-a-partnership-approach.pdf aims to maximise the labour market opportunities for people to earn and save for longer reducing the risk of poverty once they have retired permanently from the labour market.

We are also committed to enabling more people to save while they are working, so that they can enjoy greater security and independence when they retire. Automatic enrolment into workplace pensions has succeeded in transforming workplace pension saving for millions of today's workers. Participation in workplace pension saving rose from 55 per cent in 2012 to 87 per cent of eligible employees in 2018, showing the positive impact of the workplace pension reforms.

Mike Amesbury:

[15118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department made of the number of winter fuel payments made to UK citizens residing in African countries in each of the last five years.

Guy Opperman:

Winter fuel payments are only payable to people at or above state pension age who are resident in the UK or certain EEA countries and Switzerland during the qualifying week, which is the third week of September.

Caroline Nokes:

[1938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with epilepsy have had their application for personal independence payment refused in each year since 2017.

Justin Tomlinson:

The latest available data on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) clearances split by main disabling condition and by type of clearance (i.e. whether the claim was awarded, disallowed or withdrawn) for both new claims and reassessments from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) made from April 2013 – October 2019 can be found at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>.

Neil Gray:

[1945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to introduce a work allowance for all universal credit claimants who do not meet the existing criteria; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is a modern, flexible, personalised benefit reflecting the rapidly changing world of work and replaces six outdated and complex benefits with one. It is simplifying the benefits system and making work pay. Monthly assessment periods align to the way the majority of people are paid and also allows Universal Credit to be adjusted each month. This means that if a claimant's income falls, they will not have to wait several months for a rise in their Universal Credit.

The Government has made significant investment to improve work incentives including: the reduction in the Universal Credit taper rate from 65% to 63% in 2017, and an extra £1.7 billion a year put into work allowances for working parents and disabled claimants to increase them by £1,000 a year from April 2019. This is providing a boost to the incomes of the lowest paid and result in 2.4 million families keeping an extra £630 per year of what they earn.

We are committed to helping the most vulnerable to improve their life chances by tackling the root causes of poverty, and ensuring that children have the best possible start in life continue to reform the welfare system so that it promotes work as the most

effective route out of poverty and is fairer towards those who receive it and the taxpayers who pay for it. We also want to identify opportunities to create a highly productive workforce, improving progression prospects for the lowest paid people so everyone has the right skills to meet the UK's future demand.

Neil Gray:

[1946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will review the minimum income floor used to estimate earnings for universal credit claimants that are self-employed.

Mims Davies:

The Department supports people to be self-employed when it is the right thing for them to do to be financially self-sufficient. Key to this is continuing to help claimants in, or considering, self-employment to progress to a level of sustained financial self-sufficiency that does not exclude the possibility of better paid work elsewhere. This ensures fairness to claimants, but also taxpayers who fund the welfare system.

Work coaches offer tailored support to our claimants who are in self-employment through to help them to increase their productivity and earnings. Work coaches can refer low-earning claimants to mentoring support from New Enterprise Allowance providers and sign-post claimants to the other extensive business support which is already funded by the Government.

We recognise that it takes time for new businesses to grow and that even established businesses can experience difficulties. From September 2020, all self-employed Universal Credit claimants will be given the same 12 months' exemption period to provide them with time and support needed to grow their businesses.

Derek Thomas:

[1949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling personal independent payment claimants who are appealing a decision to retain the use of their Motability vehicle until the conclusion of a Tribunal hearing.

Justin Tomlinson:

To be eligible for the Motability Scheme, claimants must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. To keep a Motability car, pending an appeal being heard, DWP would need to continue to pay PIP even though a decision had been made that there was no entitlement. Should the appeal not succeed, this approach would also have created a large non-recoverable overpayment - a considerable cost to the taxpayer.

However, Motability Scheme customers who leave the Scheme due to losing eligibility following a PIP award review now receive a £1,000 Stopped Allowance Payment from Motability providing the vehicle is returned within 8 weeks and in good condition.

Rushanara Ali:

[1996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners have been required to make a claim for universal credit rather than pension credit because their partner has not yet reached pension age.

Will Quince:

In 2012, Parliament voted to modernise the welfare system to ensure that couples, where one person is of working age and the other person is over State Pension age, access support, where it is needed, through the working age benefit regime. This replaces the previous system whereby the household could access either Pension Credit and pension-age Housing Benefit, or working-age benefits.

Pension Credit is designed to provide long-term support for pensioner households who are no longer economically active. It is not designed to support working age claimants. This change will ensure that the same work incentives apply to the younger partner as apply to other people of the same age, and taxpayer support is directed where it is needed most.

Between 15 May 2019, when the mixed age couples policy was implemented, and mid

August 2019, there were 1,800 new claims to Universal Credit where one member of the couple was above State Pension age and the other below (a “mixed age couple”).

Notes:

1. This is the number of couples/new claims (rounded to nearest 100) and not the number of people.
2. The data is up to mid-August as this is the latest available data.
3. The data is from the DWP management information which has been collected for internal departmental use only and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard.

Rushanara Ali:

[1999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners will see their income reduce as a result of the abolition of the Adult Dependency Increase; and what estimate he has been made of the number of pensioners who are entitled to alternative benefits.

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. The link to the Act is: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/22/contents> - the legislation relating to State Pension ADI changes can be seen at Section 4 of the Act.

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.

As at May 2019, the latest data available, the number of people in receipt of State Pension Adult Dependency Increases was 10,817. At the same date, 2,274 of these persons were also in receipt of either Pension Credit and/or Housing Benefit and may, consequently, be entitled to increases in these benefits.

Those who are already receiving Income Related Benefits (such as Pension Credit or Housing Benefit) should have their entitlement reassessed once their State Pension Adult Dependency Increase ends. We are encouraging those who are not currently getting an Income Related Benefit to check out if they are now entitled.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants have received an advance payment in the most recent 12 months for which data is available.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is now the main system of working age welfare support across the country. It is available in every Jobcentre, with a caseload of 2.8 million claimants, growing every month, now able to access the additional support and flexibilities it offers.

Between December 2018 to November 2019, 1,996,000 claimants received an advance payment.

As the overall Universal Credit caseload grows, we expect the volume and value of advance payments to increase in correlation. This shows that claimants are being made aware of advances and are using it where they need this help.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Nuclear Update

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS125\]](#)

In 2007 the Government, endorsed by a Parliamentary vote, began a programme to maintain the UK's nuclear deterrent beyond the early 2030s. The 2015 Strategic Defence & Security Review (Cm 9161) confirmed the UK's commitment to an independent minimum credible deterrent, reaffirmed in 2016 when the House voted overwhelmingly to maintain the Continuous At Sea Deterrence posture. Our independent nuclear deterrent is essential to defend the UK and our NATO allies against the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life. The Government's 2019 manifesto pledged: "We will maintain our Trident nuclear deterrent, which guarantees our security". To ensure the Government maintains an effective deterrent throughout the commission of the Dreadnought Class ballistic missile submarine we are replacing our existing nuclear warhead to respond to future threats and the security environment.

As set out in our annual updates to Parliament on the Future of the UK's Nuclear Deterrent the Ministry of Defence's Defence Nuclear Organisation is working with the Atomic Weapons Establishment: to build the highly skilled teams and put in place the facilities and capabilities needed to deliver the replacement warhead; whilst also sustaining the current warhead until it is withdrawn from service. We will continue to work closely with the U.S. to ensure our warhead remains compatible with the Trident Strategic Weapon System.

Delivery of the replacement warhead will be subject to the Government's major programme approvals and oversight. My Department will continue to provide updates through the annual report to Parliament on the United Kingdom's future nuclear deterrent.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Alleged Serious and Significant Offences (Diplomatic Immunity): 2018

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab):

[\[HCWS119\]](#)

In 2018, three serious and significant offences allegedly committed by people entitled to diplomatic or international organisation-related immunity in the United Kingdom were drawn to the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection of the Metropolitan Police Service, or other law enforcement agencies. All of these were driving-related. We define serious offences as those which could, in certain circumstances, carry a penalty of 12 months' imprisonment or more. Also included are driving under the influence and driving without insurance.

Around 23,000 people are entitled to diplomatic or international organisation-related immunity in the UK and the majority of diplomats and dependants abide by UK law. The number of alleged serious offences committed by members of the diplomatic community in the UK is proportionately low.

Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961, we expect those entitled to immunity to obey the law. The FCO does not tolerate foreign diplomats or dependants breaking the law.

We take all allegations of illegal activity seriously. When the police or other law enforcement agency bring instances of alleged criminal conduct to our attention, we ask the relevant foreign government or international organisation to waive immunity where appropriate. For the most serious offences, and when a relevant waiver has not been granted, we request the immediate withdrawal of the diplomat or dependant.

Listed below are alleged serious and significant offences reported to the FCO by UK law enforcement agencies in 2018.

2018

Driving under the influence of alcohol ^(a) ^(b)

Saudi Arabia 2

Driving under the influence of alcohol & dangerous driving ^(b)

Saudi Arabia 1

^(a) One person was responsible for the two allegations of driving under the influence of alcohol.

^(b) Owing to the serious nature of the alleged offences, both individuals were expelled from the diplomatic mission.

Figures for the previous year are available in the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' written statement to the House on 18 December 2018 (HCWS1197) which can be found at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-12-18/HCWS1197/> .

■ **Debts owed by Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations in the United Kingdom: 2018**

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab):

[[HCWS120](#)]

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials have held meetings with a number of diplomatic missions and international organisations about outstanding parking fine debt, outstanding National Non-Domestic Rates payments and unpaid Congestion Charge debt, to press for payment of outstanding fines and debts. In 2019 Protocol Directorate wrote to diplomatic missions and international organisations with debts giving them the opportunity to either pay outstanding debts, or appeal against specific fines if they considered that they had been recorded incorrectly.

Parking fines: Parking fines incurred by diplomatic missions and international organisations in London are brought to our attention by local councils, Transport for London and the City of London.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has held meetings with missions which have substantial outstanding parking fine debts. In addition, in May 2019 we wrote to the debtors concerned giving them the opportunity either to pay their outstanding fines or appeal against them if they considered that the fines had been recorded incorrectly.

The table below details those diplomatic missions and international organisations which have outstanding fines from 2018 totalling £1,000 or more, as of 2 September 2019.

DIPLOMATIC MISSION/INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION 2018	AMOUNT OF OUTSTANDING FINES (EXCLUDING LONDON CONGESTION CHARGE)
High Commission for the Federal Republic of Nigeria	£47,165
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	£19,765
High Commission for the Republic of Zambia	£17,000
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates	£11,565
Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia	£9,785
Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	£6,405
Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman	£6,115
Embassy of Libya	£5,715
Malaysian High Commission	£4,900
Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	£4,050
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	£4,000
Office of the High Commissioner for Ghana	£3,770
Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania	£3,731
Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan	£3,215
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq	£3,110
High Commission for Sierra Leone	£3,080
Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic	£2,750

DIPLOMATIC MISSION/INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION 2018	AMOUNT OF OUTSTANDING FINES (EXCLUDING LONDON CONGESTION CHARGE)
of Ethiopia	
Embassy of the People's Republic of China	£2,655
Embassy of the State of Kuwait	£2,600
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	£2,420
Embassy of the State of Qatar	£2,280
Embassy of the Republic of Angola	£2,210
Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan	£2,150
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany	£2,005
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt	£1,890
High Commission for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	£1,885
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon	£1,780
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia	£1,630
Embassy of the Republic of Liberia	£1,445
Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan	£1,430
Office of the High Commissioner for India	£1,365
Uzbekistan	£1,315
High Commission of Canada	£1,260
Embassy of the Russian Federation	£1,235
Embassy of France	£1,200
Embassy of the Republic of Poland	£1,190
Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan	£1,145
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran	£1,105
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain	£1,085
High Commission for the Republic of South	£1,085

DIPLOMATIC MISSION/INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION 2018	AMOUNT OF OUTSTANDING FINES (EXCLUDING LONDON CONGESTION CHARGE)
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Africa

Embassy of the Republic of Yemen	£1,080
Embassy of Brazil	£1,040
Royal Thai Embassy	£1,040
High Commission for Kenya	£1,020
Embassy of the United States of America	£1,015
High Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania	£1,005

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) : The majority of diplomatic missions in the United Kingdom pay the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) due from them. Diplomatic missions and international organisations are obliged to pay only 6% of the total NNDR value of their offices. This represents payment for specific services received such as street cleaning and street lighting.

Representations by Protocol Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to missions in 2018 led to the settlement of outstanding debts by a number of missions. £73,589 of the outstanding debt is owed by the Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic – which is not currently represented in the UK and we have therefore been unable to pursue this debt. We continue to urge all those with NNDR debt to pay their dues.

The Missions listed below owed over £10,000 in respect of NNDR:

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN	£164,178
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran	£143,217
Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe	£124,175
Embassy of Libya	£94,519
Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	£92,830
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq	£88,568
High Commission for the Republic of Zambia	£74,794
High Commission for Sierra Leone	£70,088
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of	£64,492

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN	£164,178
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Pakistan	
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Malaysian High Commission	£59,578
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Uganda High Commission	£52,254
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Embassy of the Russian Federation	£47,642
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Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	£41,658
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High Commission for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	£37,001
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High Commission for the Federal Republic of Nigeria	£36,975
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Embassy of the Republic of Liberia	£36,149
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Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	£32,525
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Kingdom of Eswatini High Commission	£29,860
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Embassy of the Republic of Korea	£26,896
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Embassy of the State of Qatar	£25,028
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Embassy of the United States of America	£23,694
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Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	£18,808
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Embassy of Tunisia	£15,791
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Embassy of Romania	£13,891
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Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea	£13,300
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Embassy of the Republic of Angola	£12,293
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Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania	£12,143
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Embassy of the Republic of Yemen	£11,964
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The Gambia High Commission	£11,716
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Embassy of the Republic of Haiti	£10,413
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London Congestion Charge : The value of unpaid Congestion Charge debt incurred by diplomatic missions and international organisations in London since its introduction in

February 2003 until 31 December 2018 as advised by Transport for London (TfL) was £116,868,825. The table below shows those diplomatic missions and international organisations with outstanding fines of £100,000 or more. FCO officials write to diplomatic missions and international organisations with large Congestion Charge debts annually, to encourage payment.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
Embassy of the United States of America	102,255	£12,446,845
Embassy of Japan	69,690	£8,510,650
High Commission for the Federal Republic of Nigeria	58,102	£7,063,965
Office of the High Commissioner for India	47,654	£6,009,905
Embassy of the Russian Federation	48,535	£5,721,865
Embassy of the People's Republic of China	38,528	£5,051,880
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany	37,275	£4,373,170
Embassy of the Republic of Poland	35,020	£4,345,760
Office of the High Commissioner for Ghana	31,895	£3,959,775
Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan	26,717	£3,358,585
The Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan	28,155	£3,353,420
High Commission for Kenya	22,813	£2,750,760
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	18,197	£2,305,230
Embassy of France	18,783	£2,273,440
High Commission for the United Republic of Tanzania	17,038	£2,025,070
Embassy of the Republic of	16,194	£2,020,120

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
Korea		
Embassy of Spain	16,425	£1,979,560
Embassy of the Republic of Cuba	14,385	£1,806,960
Embassy of Algeria	14,206	£1,727,030
High Commission for the Republic of South Africa	13,931	£1,651,440
Embassy of Romania	13,579	£1,627,200
High Commission for Sierra Leone	13,148	£1,575,455
Embassy of Ukraine	12,310	£1,464,070
Embassy of Greece	12,261	£1,456,930
High Commission for the Republic of Cyprus	9,396	£1,152,870
Embassy of Hungary	9,508	£1,150,360
High Commission for the Republic of Zambia	8,333	£1,011,010
Embassy of the Republic of Yemen	7,879	£949,660
Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria	7,139	£840,390
High Commission for Botswana	6,186	£768,040
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey	5,797	£752,240
High Commission for the Republic of Malawi	5,958	£722,145
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon	6,117	£721,420
High Commission of the Republic of Mozambique	5,812	£706,960

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
Embassy of the Republic of Belarus	5,931	£700,965
Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	5,631	£668,150
Embassy of the Slovak Republic	5,566	£653,980
High Commission for the Republic of Namibia	5,472	£646,070
High Commission for the Republic of Zimbabwe	5,561	£643,945
Kingdom of Eswatini High Commission	5,377	£636,350
Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	5,219	£635,660
High Commission for Malta	4,857	£596,975
Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania	4,694	£590,985
High Commission for Mauritius	4,655	£559,575
Embassy of Austria	4,584	£556,740
Embassy of the Republic of Liberia	4,332	£542,030
Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea	4,550	£537,690
Uganda High Commission	4,243	£519,580
High Commission for the Kingdom of Lesotho	4,157	£491,960
Embassy of Belgium	3,812	£463,220
Embassy of the Islamic State of Afghanistan	3,512	£427,840
Embassy of the Czech Republic	3,648	£426,270

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam	3,556	£425,800
Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco	3,228	£423,790
High Commission for the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	3,043	£397,480
High Commission for Jamaica	3,173	£385,020
Royal Danish Embassy	3,076	£370,555
Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo	2,932	£369,440
Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan	2,759	£357,990
Embassy of Tunisia	2,798	£357,840
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq	2,467	£323,920
Embassy of Portugal	2,357	£292,280
Embassy of the Republic of Latvia	2,332	£285,870
High Commission for Antigua & Barbuda	2,277	£281,795
Embassy of Finland	2,273	£278,010
Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2,297	£267,640
Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia	2,072	£260,930
Embassy of Luxembourg	2,031	£245,155
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt	2,299	£243,220
High Commission for Belize	1,906	£243,090
Royal Embassy of Saudi	1,845	£204,980

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF FINES	TOTAL OUTSTANDING
Arabia		
Embassy of the Republic of Guinea	1,731	£192,030
Embassy of Estonia	1,461	£181,140
Embassy of the State of Eritrea	1,315	£158,950
High Commission for Guyana	1,262	£154,010
Embassy of the Dominican Republic	1,245	£150,090
High Commission of the Republic of Seychelles	1,127	£145,455
Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	1,052	£139,750
High Commission of the Republic of Maldives	1,086	£136,130
Embassy of El Salvador	996	£126,445
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania	1,060	£115,170
Embassy of the Republic of Albania	839	£108,800
Embassy of the Republic of Moldova	876	£106,630

Figures for previous years are available in the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' written statement to the House on 18 December 2018 (HCWS1204) which can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-12-18/HCWS1204/>

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Government Response to the Consultation on the draft Human Tissue (Permitted Material: Exceptions) (England) Regulations 2020

Minister of State for Care (Helen Whately):

[[HCWS121](#)]

The Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 heralds a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation in England. Subject to Parliament's approval of the secondary legislation and Code of Practice for healthcare professionals, the new system is intended to start in England from 20 May 2020.

Under the new system, known as "opt out" or "deemed consent", people over 18 in England will be considered to have agreed to donate their organs and tissue after death, except where:

- they made a decision to not donate their organs and/or tissue, i.e. they have opted out;
- they have nominated a representative to make a decision on their behalf after death about whether to donate; or
- they are in one of the excluded groups: under the age of 18; ordinarily resident in England for less than 12 months before their death; lacked mental capacity to understand the new system for a significant period before their death.

The Government held a 12-week public consultation from 29 April to 22 July 2019 to seek views on a proposed list of organs, tissues and cells to exclude from deemed consent and which should therefore continue to require express consent before they can be removed, stored or used for transplantation. The list of organs, tissues and cells to exclude from deemed consent was set out in the draft "Human Tissue (Permitted Material): Exceptions (England) Regulations". The Government received over 3,200 responses across different demographics which provided rich data on the questions asked.

The Government Response to the consultation on the regulations has been laid before Parliament today (CP 224), alongside the revised draft "Human Tissue (Permitted Material): Exceptions (England) Regulations 2020" and the Human Tissue Authority's Codes of Practice for healthcare professionals setting out practical guidance about deemed consent. Copies of the Government Response, the regulations and the Codes of Practice are available to hon. Members from the Vote Office and to noble Lords from the Printed Paper Office, along with the Government Response being published on GOV.UK at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/opt-out-organ-donation-organs-and-tissues-excluded-from-the-new-system>.

To address the issues raised in the consultation, the Government has:

- i) updated the list of what is excluded from deemed consent to clarify further that tissue from sexual and reproductive organs (including skin) will not be transplanted without express consent;
- ii) expanded the list featuring the parts of the male and the female reproductive system;

iii) reviewed the list to clarify further that specific tissues (for example bone, skin and muscle) will be transplanted under deemed consent if the tissue is to be used for a routine transplant. As now, if the tissue is needed for a rare transplant this will require express consent; and

iv) expanded the list of proposed Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMPs) to exclude from deemed consent. Although the Government recognises the benefits of ATMPs, use of ATMPs from deceased donors is novel and it is appropriate that express consent is in place when cells are donated.

To make the public aware of the new system of consent, NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) launched a communication campaign on behalf of Government in April 2019. A number of platforms have been used since then to raise public awareness of the new system, more recently through TV and radio adverts, along with public advertising with specific targeting of people with different backgrounds, faith and beliefs. NHSBT will continue their awareness campaign, also working with GP practices, schools and BAME communities to address barriers to organ donation.

HOME OFFICE

■ The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's report on Westminster

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS124\]](#)

Today the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published its latest report, which can be found at www.iicsa.org.uk.

This report relates to its investigation into Westminster. I pay tribute to the strength and courage of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences to ensure the Inquiry can deliver its vital work.

Government will review this report and consider how to respond to its content in due course.

I would like to thank Professor Jay and her Panel for their continued work to uncover the truth, expose what went wrong in the past and to learn the lessons for the future.

TREASURY

■ Finance Bill 2020

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman):

[HCWS122]

The Finance Bill will be published on 19 March. Explanatory notes on the Bill will be available in the Vote Office and the Printed Paper Office and placed in the Libraries of the House on that day. Copies of the explanatory notes will also be available on GOV.UK.

As usual, a full copy of the Budget resolutions will be made available after the Chancellor's Budget statement on 11 March. This includes resolutions made under the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968 for those measures that are expected to come into effect ahead of Finance Bill Royal Assent.

In line with the approach to tax policy making set out in the Government's documents 'Tax Policy Making: a new approach', published in 2010, and 'The new Budget timetable and the tax policy making process', published in 2017, the Government published draft legislation for Finance Bill 2020 on 11 July 2019, which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/finance-bill-2019-20>.

The Government remains committed to legislating those measures published in July 2019, subject to confirmation at Budget 2020.

■ Public Service Pension Scheme Indexation and Revaluation 2020

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay):

[HCWS123]

Legislation governing public service pensions requires them to be increased annually by the same percentage as additional pensions (State Earnings Related Pension and State Second Pension). Public service pensions will therefore be increased from 6 April 2020 by 1.7 per cent, in line with the annual increase in the Consumer Prices Index up to September 2019, except for those public service pensions which have been in payment for less than a year, which will receive a pro-rata increase.

Separately, in the career average public service pension schemes introduced in 2014 and 2015, pensions in accrual are revalued annually in relation to either prices or earnings depending on the terms specified in their scheme regulations. The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 requires HM Treasury to specify a measure of prices and of earnings to be used for revaluation by these schemes.

The prices measure is the Consumer Prices Index up to September 2019. Public service schemes which rely on a measure of prices, therefore, will use the figure of 1.7 per cent for the prices element of revaluation.

The earnings measure is the whole economy year on year change in average weekly earnings (non-seasonally adjusted and including bonuses and arrears) up to September 2019. Public service schemes which rely on a measure of earnings, therefore, will use the figure of 4 per cent for the earnings element of revaluation.

Revaluation is one part of the amount of pension that members earn in a year and needs to be considered in conjunction with the amount of in-year accrual. Typically, schemes

with lower revaluation will have faster accrual and therefore members will earn more pension per year.

The following list shows how the main public service schemes will be affected by revaluation:

SCHEME	POLICE	FIRE	CIVIL SERVICE	NHS	TEACHERS	LGPS	ARMED FORCES	JUDICIAL
Revaluation for active member	2.95%	4%	1.7%	3.2%	3.3%	1.7%	4%	1.7%