



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 26 February 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 26 February 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	6	■ BBC: Political Impartiality	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	6	■ Broadband: Rural Areas	14
■ Climate Change Convention	6	■ Christ Church College: Criminal Investigation	14
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	6	■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Huawei	15
■ Land Registry: Standards	7	■ Local Government: Internet	15
■ Warm Home Discount Scheme	7	■ Offensive Weapons: Sales	16
DEFENCE	8	■ Royal Opera House: Finance	16
■ Armed Forces: Schools	8	■ Social Media: Advertising	17
■ Army: Resignations	9	■ Tickets: Touting	17
■ Astute Class Submarines: Procurement	9	EDUCATION	18
■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Repairs and Maintenance	9	■ Children in Care	18
■ Military Bases: Northern Ireland	10	■ Children: Health	19
■ Ministry of Defence: Huawei	10	■ Free School Meals	19
■ Red Arrows	11	■ Free School Meals: Barnsley	20
■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement	11	■ Google: Training	21
■ Warships	12	■ Home Education: Public Consultation	21
■ World War II: Wrecks	12	■ Maternity Pay: Teachers	21
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	13	■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure	22
■ Arts Council England: Finance	13	■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and National College for High Speed Rail	23
■ BBC: Marketing	13		

■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure: Inspections	23	■ Perfluorooctanoic Acid: Regulation	39
■ National College for High Speed Rail: Annual Reports	23	■ Pest Control: Private Property	40
■ Schools: Uniforms	23	■ Plastics: Marine Environment	40
■ Special Educational Needs: North East	24	■ Plastics: Waste	41
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	25	■ Roads: Litter	41
■ Agriculture: Trade Agreements	25	■ Rodents: Pest Control	42
■ Ammonium Nitrate	25	■ Waste Disposal	42
■ Biodiversity	26	■ Waste Management	42
■ Broadband: Infrastructure	27	■ Water Companies: Carbon Emissions	43
■ Chemicals	27	FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	43
■ Dogs: Tagging	28	■ Armenia: Gold	43
■ Domestic Waste: Waste Disposal	29	■ Cameroon: Human Rights	44
■ Energy: Waste	29	■ China: Uighurs	44
■ Fisheries: Navy	31	■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Democracy	45
■ Fishing Catches	31	■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Research	45
■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software	32	■ Gaza	46
■ Flood Control	32	■ Israel: Palestinians	46
■ Flood Control: Finance	33	■ Jamal Khashoggi	47
■ Flood Control: North East	34	■ Judith MacGregor	47
■ Food: Exports	34	■ Libya: Arms Trade	47
■ Horse Racing: Animal Welfare	35	■ Libya: Human Rights	48
■ Horses: Animal Welfare	35	■ Middle East: Overseas Aid	48
■ Inland Waterways: Access	36	■ Motor Sports and Human Rights: Saudi Arabia	48
■ Landfill	36	■ Politics and Government	49
■ Meat: Imports	37	■ Sanctions	49
■ Montreal Protocol	38	■ Saudi Arabia: Political Prisoners	50
■ Noise: Court Orders	38	■ Seas and Oceans: Environment Protection	50
■ Peat Bogs: Fires	39		

■ Venezuela: Politics and Government	51	■ Home Office: Written Questions	62
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	51	■ Immigrants: English Language	62
■ Cancer: Health Education	51	■ Immigration Controls	62
■ Cancer: Research	52	■ Immigration Controls: Airports	63
■ Dental Services: Children	52	■ Immigration: EU Nationals	63
■ Doctors: Registration	52	■ Immigration: Married People	64
■ Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards	53	■ Metropolitan Police: Biometrics	65
■ Food: Packaging	54	■ Migrant Workers	65
■ General Practitioners: Correspondence	54	■ Refugees	66
■ General Practitioners: Houghton and Sunderland South	54	■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence	66
■ Hospitals: Radio	55	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	66
■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists	55	■ Ground Rent	66
■ Lymphoedema: Health Services	55	■ Leasehold Advisory Service: Finance	66
■ Medical Treatments: Innovation	56	■ Local Government Finance	67
■ Menopause	56	■ Towns Fund	67
■ Mental Health Act 1983	57	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	68
■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People	57	■ Brazil: Health Services	68
■ Midwives: Migrant Workers	58	■ Department for International Development: Departmental Responsibilities	68
■ NHS: Agency Workers	59	■ Developing Countries: Vaccination	68
■ Pancreatic Cancer: Research	59	■ Private Infrastructure Development Group: Overseas Aid	69
■ Perfluorooctanoic Acid: Health Hazards	60	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	70
■ Suicide	61	■ Trade Agreements: Negotiations	70
■ Thalidomide	61	■ Trade Promotion: Cuba	70
■ Urology: Vacancies	61	■ UK Export Finance: Fossil Fuels	70
HOME OFFICE	61		
■ Home Office: Legal Costs	61		

■ UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group	71	■ Railways: Veterans	82
JUSTICE	71	■ Rolling Stock	83
■ Business: Fraud	71	■ Shipping: Equality	83
■ Crown Court	71	■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions	83
■ Debt Collection	73	■ Taxis: Licensing	84
■ Offenders: Females	73	■ Travel: Concessions	84
■ Prostitution	73	■ Unmanned Air Vehicles	85
NORTHERN IRELAND	74	TREASURY	85
■ Borders: Northern Ireland	74	■ Beer: Excise Duties	85
■ Northern Ireland Executive: Select Committees	74	■ Financial Services: EU Action	85
SCOTLAND	75	■ Fuels: Excise Duties	86
■ City Region Deals: Clackmannanshire and Stirling	75	■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements	86
■ Food Banks: Scotland	75	■ Mental Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements	87
TRANSPORT	75	■ Mortgages: Government Assistance	87
■ Airports: Carbon Emissions	75	■ VAT	88
■ Bus Services: East Midlands	76	WALES	88
■ Bus Services: Profits	76	■ Railways: Veterans	88
■ Driving: Licensing	76	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	89
■ Electric Vehicles	77	■ EnAble Fund for Elected Office: Applications	89
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	78	WORK AND PENSIONS	89
■ Great Western Railway Line: Fares	79	■ Children: Maintenance	89
■ Heathrow Airport: Construction	79	■ Employment and Support Allowance	90
■ High Speed 2 Railway Line	80	■ Independent Serious Case Panel	91
■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Iron and Steel	80	■ Maternity Allowance	91
■ Motor Vehicles: Fuels	80	■ Pension Credit	91
■ Peckham Rye Station: Lifts	81	■ Pensioners: Poverty	92
■ Ports: Finance	81	■ Universal Credit	95
■ Public Transport: Leicester	81	■ Universal Credit: Aberavon	95
■ Railway Signals: Procurement	82	■ Universal Credit: Wales	95

WRITTEN STATEMENTS	97	PRIME MINISTER	98
HOME OFFICE	97	■ Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy	98
■ Introducing a Police Covenant for England and Wales	97		

Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.
 Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Climate Change Convention

Anna McMorrin:

[\[19003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to engage Parliamentarians as part of preparations for the 26th United Nations Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change hosted by the UK Government in December 2020.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is working to ensure that parliamentarians are involved in the preparations and delivery of COP26, and that cross party ambition is galvanised to ensure the success of the conference.

The Government is committed to making a success of COP26, working across Departments. A key element of this is working towards the UK's net zero commitment, which is very important to this Government both domestically and internationally.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Grahame Morris:

[\[18504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will allocate research and development funding to reduce the time it takes to fully charge an electric vehicle at a charging point.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has committed £274m between 2017-2021 into the Faraday Battery Challenge to support the research, development and scale-up of world-leading battery technology in the UK. The aims of the Faraday Battery Challenge include developing batteries with higher energy and power densities and longer life, to enable electric vehicles with long-range on a single charge and quick recharging.

The Government, through Innovate UK, is also supporting a range of infrastructure innovation projects including on street and wireless charging. In addition, action from both Government and industry has resulted in the installation of over 24,000 public chargepoints.

■ Land Registry: Standards

Catherine West: [\[18780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) time taken to process applications at the Land Registry and (b) adequacy of that waiting period.

Paul Scully:

HM Land Registry (HMLR) receives 120,000 applications per day, of which 95% are processed within the service standard of 5 days for register updates (to an existing title) and 25 days for more complex applications that require the creation of a new title (for example on the first registration of a property or a new lease). There is a backlog of some complex casework involving the creation of a new title, which account for 5% of applications.

HMLR recognise that this situation needs addressing and are implementing plans to reduce the waiting times for those cases. These applications relate to an already completed property transaction but HMLR will expedite cases where necessary to avoid adverse impacts on customers.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme

Jo Stevens: [\[18686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been accepted for the Warm Home Discount scheme and who have not yet had that discount applied to their energy bill.

Jo Stevens: [\[18687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of people (a) eligible for and (b) in receipt of the Warm Home Discount since September 2019.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Under the Warm Home Discount Core Group, to qualify a person, or their partner, should have been in receipt of the Pension Credit Guarantee Credit element on the qualification date 7th July 2019. There are 1.3 million such households though not all of them have accounts with obligated energy suppliers.

Energy suppliers are required to pay a minimum of 1.1 million rebates to the Warm Home Discount Broader Group out of around 1.5 million households eligible under the mandatory eligibility criteria. In addition to the criteria set by Government, energy suppliers can get additional criteria approved by Ofgem making the eligible pool larger.

Most suppliers pay rebates to the Core Group between October and the end of January and we estimate that around 1.1 million will receive the rebate this winter. We expect energy suppliers to pay most of the Broader Group rebates, on a first-come first-served basis, by the end of February. Suppliers have until the 31st March to provide rebates under the scheme.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Schools****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[18669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question on Armed Forces: Schools, if he will provide the figures for the number of visits by representatives from the (a) Army, (b) Royal Navy and (c) Royal Air Force made to schools and colleges in (i) Wales, (ii) Scotland, (iii) England and (iv) Northern Ireland in the financial years (A) 2017-18 and (B) 2018-19.

Johnny Mercer:

The Armed Forces only visit schools and colleges when they have been invited to support activities. No visits to schools by the Armed Forces are directly linked to recruitment, other than specific careers/jobs fairs which generally involve a range of employers. While presentations may be given highlighting the careers available in the Armed Forces, no pupil is able to make a commitment to become a recruit in the Armed Forces during the course of a visit. The visits cover a range of activities such as career events, citizenship talks, science and maths challenges and other indoor or outdoor exercises. The purpose of the visit is always agreed in advance.

The requested information is provided in the following table:

COUNTRY	YEAR	ROYAL NAVY	ARMY	ROYAL AIR FORC E	
	Wales	2017-18	110	70	157
2018-19	147	217	64		
	Scotland	2017-18	159	372	463
2018-19	237	399	519		
	England	2017-18	2,448	1,988	1,774
2018-19	3,187	2,296	1,686		
	Northern Ireland	2017-18	114	292	18
2018-19	138	396	63		

Notes: Army figures relate to Financial Years. Royal Navy and Royal Air Force figures relate to Academic Years.

Figures are single Service estimates.

■ Army: Resignations

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[18659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many soldiers who enlisted aged (a) under 18 and (b) 18 or over in financial year (i) 2015-16, (ii) 2016-17, and (iii) 2017-18 dropped out of the army before completing their phase two training.

James Heapey:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer the then Minister for the Armed Forces, (Anne-Marie Trevelyan) gave on 30 January 2020, to Question 8412.

Attachments:

1. 8412 - Army Recruitment [20200130_8412_Army_Recruitment.docx]

■ Astute Class Submarines: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Royal Navy has procured seven Astute-class submarines.

Jeremy Quin:

We remain committed to delivering seven Astute Class submarines by 2026. The contract for the procurement of the seventh and last boat in this Class, AGINCOURT, was announced in May 2018, underpinning the commitment made in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[18889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the HMS Queen Elizabeth returned to Portsmouth on 14 February 2020 due to a fault.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[18890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of reported maintenance matters on HMS Queen Elizabeth on the operational capability of that vessel.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[18891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days of maintenance his Department has planned for HMS Queen Elizabeth in the last 12 months.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[18892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many days HMS Queen Elizabeth has been under maintenance in the last 12 months.

Jeremy Quin:

HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH returned to HM Naval Base Portsmouth on 14 February after successfully completing her operational activities.

Between January and December 2019, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH was scheduled for 24 weeks of maintenance; this included her planned dry-docking period in Rosyth. She underwent no additional days of maintenance while alongside. Maintenance work on individual ship systems takes place during both these scheduled periods alongside and operational deployments. Information on maintenance conducted while deployed is not collated centrally.

We do not disclose the materiel states of individual ships for operational security reasons, as this would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ **Military Bases: Northern Ireland**

Stephen Farry:

[\[18931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress he has made on plans for the disposal of Kinnegar Logistics Base in Holywood, County Down.

Jeremy Quin:

Kinnegar Logistics Base was announced for disposal through 'A Better Defence Estate' in November 2016 with an intended disposal date of 2022. The capabilities in Kinnegar Logistic Base will be re-provided for in Palace Barracks and Flying Station Aldergrove.

Detailed re-location assessment work will now take place over the next 12 to 18 months during which the Department will ensure appropriate levels of engagement will take place with the relevant local authorities.

The disposal will be handled in accordance with the Department's standard disposal process as mandated by the Treasury.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Huawei**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[18812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) meetings and (b) other representations his Department has had with Huawei since 1 January 2019.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence publishes in arrears details of Ministers' and Senior Officials' meetings on a quarterly basis on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-ministry-of-defence> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-staff-meetings-with-external-organisations> .

The following details can be found in the returns:

- The date of the meeting
- The name of the organisation or individuals who attended the meeting
- The purpose of the meeting

■ Red Arrows

Sir Edward Leigh: [\[18484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team plans to vacate RAF Scampton; and to which RAF base that Team will relocate.

Jeremy Quin:

As announced in July 2018, RAF Scampton is due to close in 2022. The future location of the Red Arrows is still being determined, with RAF Leeming, RAF Waddington and RAF Wittering identified as potential sites.

■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on defence capabilities of the decision to delay the delivery of Type 31 frigates until 2027.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of effect of the later-than expected in-service date for the Navy's new Type 31 frigates on the (a) duties and (b) capacity of offshore patrol vessels until 2027.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason his Department decided to delay the delivery of four Type 31 frigates until 2027.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an estimate of the cost to the public purse of the delay to the delivery of the four Type 31 frigates.

Jeremy Quin:

There is no delay to the delivery of the Type 31 frigates. The first ship will be in the water in 2023 and all five ships will be delivered by the end of 2028.

Five Batch 2 Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV), built in partnership with BAE Systems on the Clyde, are being delivered for the Royal Navy. HMS FORTH and HMS MEDWAY are currently deployed. HMS TRENT and HMS TAMAR have been delivered and HMS SPEY is expected to be delivered to the Royal Navy by the end of the year. Of the three Batch 1 OPVs, HMS TYNE and HMS MERSEY are operational, and HMS SEVERN is being prepared to return to service. Their tasking will be based on Defence requirements.

■ Warships

Nia Griffith: [\[15002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's projection is of the number of Type (a) 23, (b) 26, (c) 31e and (d) 45 ships that will be in service in the Royal Navy in each year from 2020 to 2030.

Luke Pollard: [\[2046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his current projection is of the number of Type (a) 23, (b) 26, (c) 31e and (d) 45 ships that will be in service in the Royal Navy in each year from 2020 to 2030.

Jeremy Quin:

[Holding answer 24 February 2020]: We remain committed to ensuring the Royal Navy has the ships and capabilities required to fulfil Defence commitments now and in the future.

Babcock is contractually obligated to deliver five Type 31 Frigates to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) by the end of 2028, and HMS GLASGOW, the first of the Type 26 Frigates, will be in-service with the MOD in 2027. The last Type 23 Frigate will be transitioned out of service in 2035. The first Type 45 Destroyer entered service in 2010, these Destroyers have a projected 25-year life span.

The Prime Minister has committed to undertake the deepest review of Britain's security, defence and foreign policy. This review will examine how we strengthen and prioritise our alliances, diplomacy and development and will consider all aspects of our defence and security capabilities, including our approach to procurement and maintaining our technological edge. We are considering a number of options to increase the availability of ships during this period.

■ World War II: Wrecks

Luke Pollard: [\[18395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the physical condition of the wrecks of (a) HMS Prince of Wales and (b) HMS Repulse.

James Heappey:

The Department's Salvage and Maritime Operations organisation conducted a survey in March 2019 as part of its Wreck Management Programme. This showed significant damage to both ships, especially HMS REPULSE, likely caused by illegal salvage.

This issue has been raised with the Malaysian Government and we continue to work closely with the relevant authorities in the region to afford these sites suitable protection. The wrecks of HMS REPULSE and HMS PRINCE OF WALES are designated as protected places under the UK's Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Arts Council England: Finance****Rachael Maskell:**[\[15045\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding was awarded to organisations in (a) York and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber from Arts Council England in each year since 2015-16.

Caroline Dinenge:

Funding awarded to (a) York and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber from Arts Council England since 2015-16 is as follows:

(a) York

- 2015/16 - £4,282,815
- 2016/17 - £4,484,841
- 2017/18 - £4,103,363
- 2018/19 - £3,663,769

(b) Yorkshire and the Humber

- 2015/16 - £63,523,976
- 2016/17 - £80,184,676
- 2017/18 - £61,387,922
- 2018/19 - £65,354,904

■ BBC: Marketing**Alex Sobel:**[\[19017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support the development of the BBC as a global brand.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The BBC is editorially and operationally independent from the government and the government cannot intervene in its day-to-day decisions, including those taken about its brand and reputation internationally.

However, the Government recognises that the BBC sets the international benchmark for quality, producing outstanding television, radio and online programmes and services that are exported throughout the world. We also support the BBC's mission to bring high quality and impartial news to global audiences, including where free speech is limited.

That is why the government ensured that the Charter gave the BBC a purpose of reflecting the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world and ring-fenced a minimum spend of £254m on the World Service until 2021/22.

■ BBC: Political Impartiality**Alex Sobel:**[\[19018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help ensure the BBC is politically impartial.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Following Charter Review in 2016, the government embedded impartiality into the BBC's Mission in the Charter. The BBC also has a duty to deliver impartial and accurate news coverage and content under its Charter obligations. It is for the BBC Board to ensure the quality of all BBC's content, and that BBC output meets the highest standards the public expect.

It is not for the government to make judgements about perceived political bias at the BBC. This is a matter for Ofcom, as the BBC's regulator. Ofcom is responsible for setting rules to ensure BBC coverage is impartial and accurate under the Broadcasting Code and for holding the BBC to account against its public purposes as the BBC regulator.

■ Broadband: Rural Areas**Martyn Day:**[\[15151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that rural areas have access to new superfast broadband infrastructure.

Matt Warman:

The Government's Superfast programme has invested more than £1.8bn of public money to provide over 96% of UK premises with access to superfast broadband. BDUK continues to work closely with Local Authorities and Devolved Administrations to deliver through the programme. This also includes identifying further premises in rural areas that do not yet have access to Superfast broadband.

This Government will also deliver on its promise to commit £5bn of public money to make sure the hardest to reach areas will be connected with gigabit-capable connectivity. With this funding, we can deliver world class connectivity in rural areas at the same time as it is deployed to our cities, to ensure that a connected, 21st century Britain is a reality for all communities across the UK.

■ Christ Church College: Criminal Investigation**John Howell:**[\[18587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will direct the Charity Commission to undertake an investigation into the expenditure of over £2m of charitable funds on legal expenses by the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford in relation to that College's attempt to dismiss the Dean of that College.

Oliver Dowden:

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator and registrar for charities in England and Wales. As an independent non-Ministerial Department, Ministers cannot direct or control the Charity Commission. It is answerable to the courts for its legal decisions.

Disputes and disagreements in charities can be particularly damaging to the public's confidence in charities. The Charity Commission opened a regulatory compliance case into Christ Church college in January last year and has continued to engage with the charity over a number of issues connected to the dispute at the College. These have included the expenditure of charitable funds on legal expenses connected to the dispute. The Commission has also instructed the trustees to commission an independent governance review. The Commission continues to closely engage with the charity and will do so until the matter is resolved.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Huawei**Chi Onwurah:****[18811]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) meetings and (b) other representations his Department has had with Huawei since 1 January 2019.

Matt Warman:

Huawei, together with UK telecoms operators and other equipment suppliers were consulted during the process of the Telecoms Supply Chain Review, published in July 2019.

DCMS Ministers and officials have either met with or corresponded with Huawei on a number of occasions since January 2019.

■ Local Government: Internet**Chi Onwurah:****[1991]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance the Government provides to local authorities on the use of (a) third party companies and (b) adtech on their websites.

Caroline Dinage:

The Government Communication Service in the Cabinet Office provides general best-practice guidance on its website on compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Privacy Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) when developing a government campaign website, including on the use of third party cookies, which is available at:

<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/websites-government-campaigns/>.

At the same time, the Government Digital Service, also in the Cabinet Office, maintains the Government Design Principles for the development of user-friendly digital services which advises, among other things, on the use of data and analytics, and which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-design-principles>.

These are principally intended for central government but are publicly available for wider use in the public sector, including by local authorities.

■ **Offensive Weapons: Sales**

Stephen Timms: [\[18449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the oral contribution by the Minister for Safeguarding and Vulnerability to the Offensive Weapons Bill Committee on 11 September 2018, Column 280, what policy proposals he is discussing with the Home Secretary on preventing the sale of illegal knives on online platforms.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is committed to delivering on the people's priorities by tackling violent crime, including through the Offensive Weapons Act which received Royal Assent on 16 May 2019.

In addition, the Government published the initial response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation on 12 February 2020. This is a joint Home Office and DCMS publication that summarises themes from the 2019 consultation.

The interim response confirmed that the Government is developing legislation on online harms to establish a new duty of care on online companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. This will ensure companies take action to address harmful behaviour online, including the sale of weapons and other illegal goods and services. The regulator will issue codes of practice on what companies need to do to fulfil their duty of care. The regulator will work with law enforcement regarding expectations relating to illegal content and behaviour to ensure they adequately keep pace with the threat.

We will set out our final policy position on this issue in a full Government response later this year, before moving to legislation.

■ **Royal Opera House: Finance**

Rachael Maskell: [\[15046\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding was awarded to the Royal Opera House from Arts Council England in each year since 2015-16.

Caroline Dinenage:

Funding awarded to the Royal Opera House from Arts Council England since 2015-16 is as follows:

- 2015/16 - £26,064,991
- 2016/17 - £25,577,828
- 2017/18 - £25,498,841
- 2018/19 - £24,845,615

■ Social Media: Advertising

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[15107\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the dangers of advertising cosmetic procedures on social media.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

The ASA has published guidance to advertisers on how it would be likely to interpret the CAP Code when considering complaints relating to adverts promoting cosmetic procedures. This guidance stresses the burden of social responsibility that the Code places on advertisers, including the importance of avoiding trivialising the advertised procedures, exploiting insecurities, employing exaggerated or unrealistic claims, and targeting vulnerable groups.

Separately to this, the government is reviewing how online advertising is regulated in the UK, looking at how well the current regime is equipped to tackle the challenges posed by developments in online advertising. Although this work will not directly address issues relating to specific rules or sectors, it will consider cross-cutting challenges with potential to impact the wider market. A call for evidence on online advertising was published last month.

■ Tickets: Touting

Catherine West:

[\[18646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle ticket-touting in sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are committed to cracking down on unacceptable behaviour in the ticketing market and improving fans' chances of buying tickets at a reasonable price. We have strengthened the existing ticketing information requirement in the Consumer Rights Act 2015, and have introduced a new criminal offence of using automated software to buy more tickets online than that allowed.

We support the work of enforcement agencies in this area, such as the Competition and Markets Authority, National Trading Standards, and the advertising industry's own regulator, the Advertising Standards Authority.

Recent announcements of enforcement action by these agencies demonstrate that we are prepared to go after those who flout the law or abuse the ticketing market.

EDUCATION**■ Children in Care**

Catherine McKinnell: [\[18826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number of looked after children by placement type as set out in National Tables: children looked after in England including adoption A2 in the last 12 months.

Catherine McKinnell: [\[18828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked-after children there were at (a) 31 March 2019, (b) 31 March 2018, (c) 31 March 2017 and (d) 31 March 2016 in England; and how many and what proportion of those children were (a) two or more siblings that were looked after, (b) two or more siblings that were placed together and (c) one or more children that were not placed with a brother or sister.

Vicky Ford:

Information on children looked after as at 31 March 2019 by placement is published in Table A2 of the annual statistical release 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2018 to 2019', which is available at the following link:

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

The information requested on family context is not held centrally.

Data relating to the year ended 31 March 2020 will be released in Autumn 2020, in line with our publication schedule.

Catherine McKinnell: [\[18827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number of children in England aged (a) under one, (b) one to four, (c) five to nine, (d) 10 to 15 and (e) 16 and over in each placement type in National Tables: children looked after in England including adoption A2 in each (i) local authority area and (ii) region at 31 March (A) 2016, (B) 2017 and (C) 2018.

Vicky Ford:

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

The latest figures on children taken into care by age and placement type are published for England at 31 March 2019 in Table A1 and A2 of the statistical release 'Children Looked after in England including adoptions: 2018:2019' which is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

Figures on children by age and placement type have also been published separately, at local authority and regional level, in the underlying data table 'CLA2019'. These are available at the same link.

Catherine McKinnell:

[18829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number of children in England that started to be looked by (a) placement type and (b) age in each year ending 31 March (i) 2015, (ii) 2016, (iii) 2017 (iv) 2018 and (v) 2019.

Catherine McKinnell:

[18830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many babies aged under 7 days old that started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March there were in each year from 2015 to 2019.

Vicky Ford:

Information on the number of children who started to be looked after by individual age group and within a week of birth is shown in the attached table.

Table C2 of the statistical release 'Children looked after in England (including adoption): 2018 to 2019' is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019> and includes information for the same population of children by placement type.

Attachments:

1. 18829_18830_Table
[18829_18830_Children_Looked_After_By_Age_On_Entry_To_Care.xls]

■ **Children: Health**

Stephen Timms:

[18498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to introduce a national measure of children's well-being; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

In October 2019, the government published the first 'State of the Nation' report on children and young people's mental wellbeing, to improve understanding of the trends and issues that influence young people's wellbeing. This report drew on a number of existing, large-scale, sample surveys.

The government plans to provide advice for schools later this year to help them to access evidence-based tools to measure and support their pupils' mental wellbeing. This advice is intended to be used voluntarily by schools and will not include a requirement to report back to the government.

■ **Free School Meals**

Chris Stephens:

[18848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to provide guidance to schools on good practice in relation to the roll-over of unspent free school meal allowances.

Chris Stephens:

[\[18849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much and what proportion of the funds on the cards of children entitled to free school meals was unspent in the latest period for which figures are available; and how much of those unspent funds were (a) rolled over, (b) allocated to the school budget, (b) allocated to caterers and (c) allocated to local authorities.

Vicky Ford:

Responsibility for free school meals and disadvantage policy is devolved and is therefore the responsibility of the devolved administrations.

Free school meals are intended as a benefit in kind, rather than a cash benefit, and our primary interest is that schools meet their legal duties to provide nutritious free lunches to eligible children. It is important that all pupils have access to healthy and nutritious meals at school and we would encourage all eligible children and parents to claim their free meals.

The department does not collect any information on the total or proportion of unspent funds at school or child level. We trust school leaders to make the best decisions in the interests of their pupils and it is right that they have flexibility around how they deliver free school meals. We know that some schools will allow pupils to carry over their benefit, however, we would not want to instruct schools to follow any specific approach nationally. We will consider how we can share the very best practice around the delivery of free school meals.

■ **Free School Meals: Barnsley**

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[19019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in secondary school in Barnsley who were eligible for free school meals went on to higher education in each year since 2010.

Vicky Ford:

The attached tables show the number and proportion of disadvantaged young people attending state-funded schools and colleges in Barnsley that went on to higher education after 16 to 18 study (taking A level or other level 3 qualifications) in academic years 2010/11 to 2017/18.

Table 1 includes figures for students eligible for free school meals until 2013/2014 and table 2 shows figures of students eligible for pupil premium from 2014/2015 to 2017/2018.

Free school meals and pupil premium status of students is based on eligibility in year 11. From 2017/18, the 16-18 group of leavers contains additional students who took level 3 qualifications not included in the 16-18 attainment tables. Information on

student destinations is published annually at:

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

Attachments:

1. 19019_table_Barnsley_FSM
[19019_table_student_fsm_and_pupil_premium_eligibility_Barnsley.pdf]

■ **Google: Training**

Catherine West:

[\[18712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on privacy of Google Workshops operating in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government takes data privacy, especially the privacy of more vulnerable citizens such as children, extremely seriously. The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance reflects the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation, which makes clear that schools and colleges must have sufficient policies and procedures in place to meet their legal obligations, and secure pupils data protection and privacy.

■ **Home Education: Public Consultation**

Layla Moran:

[\[19012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans publish a response to his Department's consultation on children not in school, which closed in June 2019.

Nick Gibb:

In spring 2019, a consultation was held on proposals for a mandatory register of children not attending state or registered independent schools to help local authorities carry out their responsibilities in relation to children not in school.

Almost 5000 responses were received to the consultation which closed in June 2019. They have now been considered and a formal government response document setting out next steps will be issued in due course.

■ **Maternity Pay: Teachers**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[1177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to make levels of maternity pay under the Burgundy Book scheme available for teachers working in all types of schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has no jurisdiction over maternity arrangements as these are covered by the Conditions of Service for School Teachers in England and Wales (known as "the Burgundy Book") which is widely incorporated into teachers' contracts and covers areas such as maternity pay, sick pay and resignation periods. This is a national agreement between trade unions and teacher organisations.

■ **National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure**

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[18418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons minutes of the board meetings of the National College for advanced Transport and Infrastructure have not been published since 12 December 2018.

Gillian Keegan:

As the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure is an independent organisation outside the control of the department and its agencies, publication of minutes is decided by its own board in accordance with its governance documents, available on its website.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[18419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which Minister authorised the payment of £4.55 million grant to the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure referred to in that organisation's Board Minutes dated 12 December 2018; in what amounts and on what dates that grant was paid; and whether further applications for funding of that organisation have been received by his Department.

Gillian Keegan:

In December 2018, in recognition of the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure's (NCATI) future potential to deliver high level technical education in the advanced transport industry and understanding the college's intent to rebrand itself to attract a wider market share, the former Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, the right hon. Anne Milton, approved revenue grant provision to the value of £4.55 million to the National College for High Speed Rail (now known as the NCATI). Payments of this funding were to be allocated as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	FUNDING
2018-19	£2 million
2019-20	£1.75 million
2020-21	£0.8 million

The forecasted number of learners during the October 2019 intake was lower than expected. As a result, the college was awarded an emergency payment of £600,000, paid in January 2020 to keep it operational, in place of the £800,000 due to be awarded from 1 April 2020. This emergency payment triggered an Education and Skills Funding Agency Financial Notice to Improve and a Further Education Commissioner's inspection, resulting in a recommendation for a Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA). An application for further funding (up to a maximum of £1.6 million) has been agreed. This will be paid to the college in monthly installments, on evidence of need, and is to be used for educational purposes only to keep the college operational during the SPA.

■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and National College for High Speed Rail

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [18415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will place copies of the board minutes of the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and the National College for High Speed Rail in the Library.

Gillian Keegan:

As the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure is an independent organisation outside the control of the department and its agencies, publication of minutes is decided by its own board.

■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure: Inspections

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [18416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the most recent Ofsted Report into the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure.

Gillian Keegan:

The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure's latest Ofsted report was published on 24 February 2020. The Further Education Commissioner and the Education and Skills Funding Agency have viewed the report and made recommendations for the college to follow. These supplementary documents were also published on 24 February 2020 and are available to access here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/31/144789>.

■ National College for High Speed Rail: Annual Reports

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [18417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will place in the Library the annual accounts for the National College for High Speed Two, now named the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure.

Gillian Keegan:

The National College for High Speed Rail (NCHSR), now known as the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure (NCATI) is an independent financial organisation outside the control of the department and its agencies and is responsible for the publication of its annual reports and financial statements. The department expects that the college will publish its 2018/19 accounts once signed off by its board. However, the college's previous annual accounts are already published and available on the college's website.

■ Schools: Uniforms

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [19011]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on the level of poverty of the affordability of school uniform costs.

Nick Gibb:

No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to a school. The Government is pleased to support the Private Members' Bill to 'make provision for guidance to schools about the cost aspects of school uniform policies', which was recently introduced to Parliament on 5 February 2020. This demonstrates the Government's commitment to ensuring that school uniform costs are reasonable.

It is for the governing body of a school (or in the case of academies, the academy trust) to decide whether there should be a school uniform, what it will be and how it should be sourced. To support them to do this the Department currently issues non-statutory guidance which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>.

Our current guidance states that school uniform items should be easily available for parents to purchase and schools should keep compulsory branded items to a minimum. It also states that schools should avoid single-supplier contracts, but where schools do choose to enter into such contracts, they should be subject to a regular competitive tendering process. This makes clear that we expect schools to ensure uniform costs are reasonable.

■ Special Educational Needs: North East**Chi Onwurah:****[18397]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of support offered to SEND facilities in the North East.

Vicky Ford:

We have launched a review of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system to see what improvements are required to make sure every child gets the education that is right for them.

No child or young person should be held back from reaching their potential, including those with complex special needs. This is why we have announced £780 million of additional high needs funding for local authorities nationally in the 2020-21 financial year. This is an increase of 12% compared to this year, bringing the total amount for supporting those with the most complex needs to over £7 billion.

Every local authority will see an increase in high needs funding of at least 8% per head of population aged 2 to 18. Local authorities in the North East will receive a total of £338 million in high needs funding in 2020-21, an increase of £40 million compared to this year.

We have also invested a total of £365 million through the special provision capital fund from 2018-19 to 2020-21. This funding will help local authorities to create new places and improve facilities for pupils with SEND. The North East has been allocated a total of £12.5 million from 2018-19 to 2020-21.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Trade Agreements****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[1195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what meetings have taken place between officials in her Department and officials in the Department for International Trade on protecting UK standards on (a) animal welfare, (b) environmental and (c) food safety when negotiating Free Trade Agreements.

Victoria Prentis:

My officials meet regularly with Department for International Trade officials to discuss the negotiation of Free Trade Agreements.

We have been clear - across Government, from the Prime Minister down - that we will not lower our standards in pursuit of trade deals, and that we will use all the tools at our disposal to make sure that standards are protected.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[1196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what meetings officials in her Department have held with representatives from the (a) US Administration (b) Australian Government and (c) European Commission on protecting UK standards on (i) animal welfare, (ii) environmental standards and (iii) food safety in relation to future free trade agreements.

Victoria Prentis:

Negotiations of future trade agreements with these countries have not yet begun. To date, talks between my officials and their counterparts in these countries have focused on building knowledge of our respective current domestic standards in these areas and understanding how our Partner Countries have treated them in some of their existing trade agreements.

Throughout these exploratory discussions Defra has stressed the importance of maintaining our high standards on welfare, food safety and the environment in future, all of which the Government's election manifesto committed us to protecting.

■ Ammonium Nitrate**Gareth Thomas:**[\[1849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with OFWAT on reducing ammonium nitrate from fertilisers from entering the water supply.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State has not discussed this with Ofwat. The Drinking Water Inspectorate is the regulator for drinking water quality in England and the Environment Agency monitors drinking water protected areas. Drinking water quality in England is very high. In 2018 99.95% of water supplies complied with our drinking water quality regulations, which include standards for ammonium and nitrate. The

Government is committed to maintaining these high standards and reducing fertilisers entering the water supply through regulations, incentives and advice to farmers.

Gareth Thomas: [1850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government taking to discourage (a) farmers and (b) others from using fertilisers containing ammonium nitrate.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is committed through the 25 Year Environment Plan to achieve clean and plentiful water. Agriculture is a significant contributor to water pollution. We use a number of different mechanisms to combat this including regulations, enforcement, agri-environment schemes and agricultural advice. The Farming Rules for Water were introduced in 2018. These require farmers to prevent soil being removed from the land, match nutrients to crop and soil needs and keep livestock fertilisers and manures out of the water.

We also target fertiliser use in high risk areas. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. They include about 55% of land in England. Those within NVZs must follow rules which restrict the use of nitrogen based fertiliser, and therefore reduce the risk of associated pollution.

Our regulations are supported by a series of incentives and advice. Catchment Sensitive Farming operates in the 45% of England posing the highest risk of water pollution from agriculture. The programme offers free training, advice and access to grants to farmers to reduce water and air pollution.

■ Biodiversity

Helen Hayes: [18704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the contribution of the application of the biodiversity net gain system to the UK's (a) climate, (b) tree-planting and (c) nature recovery targets.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra officials have completed an analysis of the quantified impacts of biodiversity net gain, which can be found in the regulatory impact assessment published alongside the Environment Bill.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839610/net-gain-ia.pdf

This assessment includes an estimate that mandatory biodiversity net gain will result in the creation of between 1,500 and 17,000 hectares of habitat per year. The breadth of this range is due to uncertainty over how much habitat loss will avoided altogether through the policy, and the extent of residual losses that will be compensated for by creating new habitat.

Together with the provisions in the Environment Bill for Local Nature Recovery Strategies, net gain will provide new habitats where they offer the greatest benefit for

wildlife and the wider environment. Because habitat creation through net gain will be steered by local strategies and the development impacts for which it is compensating, it is impossible to know exactly what types of habitat will be created through biodiversity net gain. It is therefore also impossible to determine the exact contributions that net gain will make towards climate, tree-planting and nature recovery targets. Biodiversity net gain will, however, complement other Government policies such as our Nature for Climate Fund and future farming policy in order to meet our commitments on these vital issues.

■ **Broadband: Infrastructure**

Martyn Day:

[\[15150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the environmental effect of installing UK-wide gigabit infrastructure.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit capable connectivity as soon as possible and is working up the detail of how this will be delivered.

For Government broadband contracts, the procurement process requires suppliers to consider ways of mitigating environmental impacts.

Where planning considerations are relevant, the National Planning Policy Framework in England states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment, including providing for net gains for biodiversity. The Framework also sets out the approach to be taken to support high quality communications. This states that where new sites are required, they should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

This policy, and the outcome of any assessments which may be required through regulatory mechanisms such as Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, will be taken into account in decision-making.

The devolved administrations are responsible for Environmental Impact Assessment regulations and Habitats Regulations Assessment in their jurisdiction.

■ **Chemicals**

Geraint Davies:

[\[18440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 February 2020 to Question 13972 on Chemicals, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts as part of the Stockholm process on the management of per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) as a group of chemicals; and whether he has made representations to his international counterparts on (a) listing and (b) managing PFAS as a group of chemicals as part of that process.

Rebecca Pow:

The Stockholm Convention lists persistent organic pollutant chemicals (POPs) that are toxic, persist in the environment, bioaccumulate in humans and animals and have long-ranging properties.

International awareness is growing of the adverse effects of PFAS as a group. The Stockholm Convention has banned some of the most harmful chemicals in the PFAS family and the UK has fully supported this action.

The Government is working with international counterparts on new PFAS assessments and lifecycle approaches and will continue work to develop these. Defra officials have been attending the POP review committee and inputting into the evidence base. The department is also financing PFAS evidence projects through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and remains an active member.

We will continue to develop our position on the rest of the PFAS group, based on evidence, and will engage with our international partners to support the ban on any PFAS substances that fulfil the POPs criteria.

Geraint Davies:[\[18441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to restrict all non-essential uses of per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFASs).

Rebecca Pow:

Per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) constitute a group of thousands of chemicals that are widely used in consumer and industrial products. There are existing restrictions on the use of certain PFAS under the Stockholm Convention, to which the UK is a signatory, and under the REACH regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals).

Defra is working with regulators to improve the understanding of the emissions and risks of PFAS in the UK, and how we manage these chemicals will be considered in our forthcoming Chemicals Strategy.

■ Dogs: Tagging**John Spellar:**[\[1864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the prevalence pet microchip databases on dog owners.

Victoria Prentis:

Under The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 all microchip databases are required to meet strict requirements, including having their records linked to each other to enable anyone searching for a microchip entry to know to which database it is registered. Any database found not to be complying with the

2015 Regulation faces a fine of up to £2,500 and having their ability to operate as a microchip database removed. There are currently thirteen compliant databases.

The 2015 Regulations are currently subject to a Post Implementation Review. As part of the review we will look at what effect the prevalence of microchip databases is having on dog owners.

■ Domestic Waste: Waste Disposal

Caroline Nokes: [\[1948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to review the 2003 household waste mix model.

Rebecca Pow:

Following our consultation in 2019 on measures to improve consistency in recycling from businesses and households, the Environment Bill published in January 2020 sets out how the Government will legislate to require local authorities to collect recyclable household waste separately from other household waste so that the waste can be recycled or composted. The recyclable household waste to be collected will be metal, paper, glass, plastics, food and garden waste. Together with similar measures to increase recycling from businesses and other organisations, these changes will help to achieve ambitions set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy 2018 to increase the quantity and quality of recyclable material collected for recycling.

■ Energy: Waste

Ian Lavery: [\[15166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of commercial recycling waste that became refuse derived fuel in each of the last 10 years.

Ian Lavery: [\[15167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of commercial recycling waste that became solid recovered fuel in each of the last 10 years.

Ian Lavery: [\[15168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of commercial recycling waste that was re-purposed in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

Information on the amount of commercial waste collected for recycling and that became refuse derived fuel or solid recovered fuel is not available. Data specifically on the collection of commercial waste for recycling are not gathered from industry. Other available data through waste data returns on waste treatment do not make it possible to reliably derive the original source of the data.

Data on the amount of commercial waste sent for recycling are not routinely quantified and published each year. The best available estimate of the recycling rate for non-household municipal waste by the commercial sector is around 35 per cent. This is based on work carried out by WRAP and published in the impact assessment related to 'Consistent municipal recycling in England'.

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/consultation-on-consistency-in-household-and-busin/supporting_documents/recycleconsistencyconsultia.pdf

The Environment Bill includes powers to introduce electronic tracking of waste to help improve the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of waste data, including data on commercial waste. In parallel the Government is working with industry on the development of waste tracking technology to ensure it meets users' needs.

Ian Lavery: **[15169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of household recycling that was burned for energy in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 February 2020 to PQ 549.

Ian Lavery: **[15170]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the level of emissions from waste to energy plants in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The [UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory \(NAEI\)](#) contains historic estimates of air pollutant emissions from emissions from waste (EfW) plants. EfW plants are permitted through the Environment Permitting Regulations and have to report annual site emissions to the UK regulators for inclusion in the [UK Pollutant Release and Transfer Register \(PRTR\)](#), if they fall above the reporting threshold. This data is used to generate the NAEI estimates for this sector.

Ian Lavery: **[15171]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many waste to energy plants were operating in (a) the UK and (b) the North East in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

Waste is a devolved matter. The Environment Agency only holds data for England. The number of waste to energy plants processing municipal waste operating in England and in the North East in the last five years is shown in the table below.

LOCATION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
England	36	39	39	41	45
North East	5	6	6	7	8

■ Fisheries: Navy

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[1181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of (a) the number of UK fishing protection vessels in operation, (b) the type of vessel in operation (c) the number of square miles of ocean the vessels patrol; and if she has plans to increase the number of fishing protection vessels.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has undertaken a thorough risk assessment of fisheries control and enforcement to ensure we have sufficient assets to meet all possible threats now that we have left the EU. These assets include, with respect to England via the Marine Management Organisation, core provision which is a scaleable, enduring patrol, surveillance and inspection capability based on two to three Offshore Patrol Vessels. In addition, the ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities in England have 22 inshore patrol vessels to undertake fisheries management and enforcement within the 0-6 nautical miles zone.

Fisheries control and enforcement is a devolved matter. It is for each Devolved Administration to decide how best to control its fishing waters. We work closely with the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure a coordinated approach to fisheries control and enforcement across UK waters.

English waters comprise around 230,000km² of the UK's total Exclusive Economic Zone of approximately 683,000km².

■ Fishing Catches

Luke Pollard:

[\[2048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of landing declarations by fishing vessels of (a) 10m and above and (b) under 12m in length were received by the Marine Management Organisation within 24 hours of landing during 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

487 of the 16,951 landing declarations submitted in 2019 by these fishing vessels were received by the Marine Management Organisation within 24 hours.

Luke Pollard: [\[2049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of landing declarations by fishing vessels of 12m and over in length were received by the Marine Management Organisation within 24 hours of landing in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

15,594 of the 47,450 landings declarations submitted in 2019 by fishing vessels in the 12-metre fleet and over were received by the Marine Management Organisation within 24 hours.

■ **Fishing Catches: Computer Software**

Luke Pollard: [\[2050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which Minister signed off the Catch App recording application for small boat fishers before the launch of that app.

Victoria Prentis:

The then Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP, approved the catch recording application in May 2019.

■ **Flood Control**

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[1171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the risk of flooding in flood risk areas by maintaining (a) peatland, (b) natural dams and (c) other natural catchment areas and defences.

Rebecca Pow:

The use of nature based solutions is an important part of the Environment Agency's (EA) strategy in strengthening resilience to flood and coastal erosion risk. Nature based solutions can include activities in different areas of a catchment for example:

- Upper slopes (tree planting, leaky debris dams and peatbog restoration)
- Mid-catchment (flood washlands and river re-connection and naturalisation)
- Coastal (management and creation of coastal marsh and sand dune systems)

Nature based solutions that are appropriately designed and situated, can help manage flood and coastal risks, often alongside other measures. Nature based solutions can also provide benefits to the natural environment, including but not limited to habitat creation, increased biodiversity and improved water quality.

Approximately 40 projects in the EA's core Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Investment programme include natural flood risk management elements and we expect the use of nature based solutions to increase.

Defra has a £15 million programme of 58 projects piloting the effectiveness of nature based solutions. These projects are testing new approaches to help determine where natural measures can be most effective at improving resilience to flood risk.

Additionally, since 2003, the Moors for the Future Partnership has transformed over 32 square kilometres of bare and eroding peat in the Peak District and South Pennines through re-vegetation, grip and gully blocking, and sphagnum planting.

Finally the Government's Agriculture Bill introduced to the House of Commons on 16 January sets out an ambitious and effective system based on the principles of 'public money for public goods'. This new scheme will enable land managers to enter into agreements to be paid for delivering a range of public goods set out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. This includes mitigation of and reduced risk from environmental hazards, such as flooding which could be achieved through natural flood management.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[1172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding has been allocated to flood defence schemes in (a) Lancashire, (b) Yorkshire and (c) Oxfordshire in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is investing £2.6 billion to better protect the country from flooding and coastal erosion between April 2015 and March 2021. This will better protect 300,000 homes in that period.

In the last five years the Environment Agency (EA) has invested £137 million on flood and coastal erosion management schemes in Lancashire.

In the last five years the EA has invested £261.3 million on flood and coastal erosion management schemes in Yorkshire. This is the total spend for the ceremonial counties of North Yorkshire, East Riding of Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

In the last five years the EA has invested £18.9 million on flood and coastal erosion management schemes in Oxfordshire.

	FINANCIAL YEAR		TOTAL GOVERNMENT SPEND (£M)
	Oxfordshire	Yorkshire	
Lancashire			
2014-15	32.7	6.4	47.7
2015-16	30.4	4.1	44.7
2016-17	34.7	2.3	44.7

2017-18	18.3	5.2	51.1
2018-19	20.9	0.9	73.1
Total	137.0	18.9	261.3

■ Flood Control: North East

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[18713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2020 to Question 11503 on Flood Control: North East, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of flood defences in the North East since (a) Storm Ciara and (b) Storm Dennis.

Rebecca Pow:

Following any storm or flood event, the Environment Agency (EA) carries out inspections of affected areas to assess flood defence assets. It does this to ensure that defences have operated effectively and will continue to do so. It also does this to assess any damages and defects as a result of the flood event. Any defects are used to inform where future investment is required.

After storms Ciara and Dennis, the EA visited communities and assessed flood defence assets in the North East where official flood warnings were issued or that were close to receiving a warning. These areas were prioritised as they were where water levels rose the furthest. Upon inspection, there were no asset failures during or following the two storm events and assets in these areas continue to operate effectively.

In addition, the EA examines the higher water levels to check flood warnings are being correctly issued and speaks with residents and businesses to ensure they have good awareness of the flood risk.

■ Food: Exports

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[1191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much (a) chicken meat, (b) beef, (c) pig meat, (d) sheep meat, (e) fresh egg, (f) egg powder, (g) fresh milk and (h) milk powder was exported from the UK in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[1192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much (a) chicken meat, (b) beef, (c) pig meat, (d) sheep meat, (e) fresh egg, (f) egg powder, (g) fresh milk and (h) milk powder was imported to the UK from (i) EU27 countries, (ii) the US, (iii) Australia, (iv) New Zealand and (v) the rest of the world in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Victoria Prentis:

UK overseas trade data is published, free of charge, by HM Revenue & Customs. It includes export and import data relating to the items requested, and is available from this web address: www.uktradeinfo.com.

■ Horse Racing: Animal Welfare**Patrick Grady:****[18846]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the recommendations in the Horse Welfare Board's five year horse welfare strategy on the use of the whip in horse racing.

Victoria Prentis:

The Horse Welfare Board's (HWB) five-year Horse Welfare Strategy (HWS) "a life well-lived" was published on 20 February 2020. The HWS contains 20 recommendations for improving horse welfare. The HWS recommends that, as a minimum, the penalties for misuse of the whip need to increase and that the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) should conduct a consultation on the use of the whip this year. As well as seeking views on appropriate sanctions for misuse of the whip, the HWS also recommends that the BHA uses the consultation to consider whether the use of the whip for encouragement should be banned or retained and whether the rules that restrict the use of the whip for encouragement need to be changed. Defra welcomes the publication of the HWS and officials will remain engaged with the BHA and the HWB on the progress being made.

■ Horses: Animal Welfare**Jack Lopresti:****[1246]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to grant local authorities the powers to prevent horse tethering.

Victoria Prentis:

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act), local authorities, together with the police and officers of the Animal & Plant Health Agency, already have powers to investigate cases of poor welfare or animal cruelty, including cases of inappropriate tethering.

Tethering can be a useful equine temporary management tool when it is used appropriately. To assist horse owners and keepers as well as inspectors there is a the statutory *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids* (the Code) which provides information on how to meet the welfare needs of horses, as required under the 2006 Act. The Code contains specific information on how to tether a horse appropriately without being breach of the 2006 Act.

Local authorities are able to make decisions based on local needs and resource priorities and the local arrangements that work best for them. Therefore, I consider that this legislation and guidance provides the right safeguards and powers in respect of horse tethering. However, we will continue to engage with key stakeholders to see

if more can be done to spread best practice among horse owners as well as increased partnership working in order to tackle the issue of inappropriate horse tethering.

■ Inland Waterways: Access

Paul Blomfield: [\[18738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of existing regulations on rights of access to waterways; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

There are no plans to undertake such an assessment.

■ Landfill

Ian Lavery: [\[15172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much waste was land-filled in the UK in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The total tonnage of waste sent for landfill in the UK is available for alternate years only. The most recent data available is for 2016 and goes back to 2010:

	<i>THOUSAND TONNES</i>
Year	Total waste sent for landfill (UK)
2010	50,707
2012	48,567
2014	48,178
2016	52,271

Full datasets are available on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env23-uk-waste-data-and-management>. The next update, with 2018 figures, will be published in March 2020.

Ian Lavery: [\[15173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the amount of land-filled waste that was recyclable in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

This data is not available. The way that the data is reported for the particular waste categories does not make it readily possible to make reliable estimates for the amount of recyclable waste that was sent to landfill. The main data on waste that

goes to landfill is from the permitted site returns that are submitted to the Environment Agency. A significant proportion (around 91 per cent in 2018) of the municipal waste sent to landfill was composed of two mixed waste categories: mixed municipal waste and sorting residues from mechanical treatment of waste.

Ian Lavery: [15175]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much has been spent from the public purse on dealing with problem arising from historical landfill sites in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

The categorisation of contaminated land sites does not allow us to stipulate exact amounts spent specifically on historical landfill sites.

However, between 2011 and 2020, £3.8 million was spent on landfill remediation works as part of the Contaminated Land Capital Grant Scheme and through the Government's investment in natural environment projects to deal with contaminated land.

Ian Lavery: [15176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the remaining capacity of landfill sites; and whether he has made an assessment of the timeframe for that capacity to be reached.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) has identified approximately 404,569,000m³ of remaining capacity at landfill facilities in England in 2018. The EA only predicts the years of capacity remaining for non-hazardous landfill sites. In 2018, there was around 6 years of non-hazardous landfill capacity remaining. However, assessing the timeframe for this capacity to be reached is difficult since we expect additional void space to be made available as the current available capacity reduces.

Total landfill capacity data is available here: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/237825cb-dc10-4c53-8446-1bcd35614c12/remaining-landfill-capacity>

■ Meat: Imports

Kerry McCarthy: [1193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which EU regulations to prohibit the import of (a) chlorine-washed chicken, (b) hormone-treated beef, (c) ractopamine-fed pork have been replicated in UK law; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Current EU controls on surface decontamination of poultry (Regulation (EC) 853/2004) will be retained through the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and have been made ready to be carried over into UK law after the Transition Period through 'The Specific Food Hygiene (Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019'. This maintains the status quo, whereby any substances

for surface contamination must be approved by the appropriate authority. No products, other than potable water, are currently approved in the EU to decontaminate poultry carcasses and this remains the case in the UK.

Council Directive 96/22/EC (as amended) prohibits the use of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action, and beta agonists (including ractopamine) in livestock farming and imported products. The EU legislation was transposed into domestic legislation by the Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) (England and Scotland) Regulations 2015, with similar legislation enacted in Wales and Northern Ireland. This legislation remains in place.

■ Montreal Protocol

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[18776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to meet the commitments of the Kigali Agreement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol commits the UK to reduce its consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a group of refrigerant gases that are very damaging to the Earth's climate, by 85% between 2019 and 2036.

Under the EU F-gas Regulation, quotas are allocated to HFC importers which are cut every three years until a 79% reduction is achieved by 2030. HFC consumption in the UK has already been cut by 37% since 2015, a world-leading phasedown which is faster than required under Kigali.

The Government will soon start a review of the F-gas Regulation, to be finished before the end of 2022, to decide how we will meet the final Kigali phasedown step between 2030 and 2036. The review will also look at how the UK can continue being even more ambitious than Kigali.

■ Noise: Court Orders

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[18926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the process is to (a) remove and (b) challenge longstanding noise abatement orders.

Rebecca Pow:

Local authorities are responsible for serving abatement notices where appropriate for noise nuisances deemed a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. An abatement notice will operate according to the conditions contained within it, which may require it to be indefinite, and which are set by the local authority serving the notice.

A person served with an abatement notice can appeal to a magistrate's court within 21 days of the date on which the notice was served. Grounds for appeal include:

- legal tests haven't been met to show that the issue is a statutory nuisance

- the notice was served on the wrong person
- the notice is defective

Industrial, trade and business premises can claim the use of “best practicable means” in their defence. This may be used as grounds for appeal against the abatement notice or a defence (if prosecuted) for not complying with the abatement notice. Only the courts can determine what the best practicable means are in each case, taking into account, among other things, the local conditions and circumstances, the current state of technical knowledge and the financial implications.

■ Peat Bogs: Fires

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[1170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the burning of peatland in England.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has always been clear on the need to end burning of protected blanket bog to conserve these vulnerable habitats and we are looking at how legislation could achieve this.

Progress is being made in promoting sustainable alternatives. We have urged landowners to adopt these and we continue to work with them constructively.

Our intention has always been to legislate if a voluntary approach failed to deliver.

■ Perfluorooctanoic Acid: Regulation

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[\[18777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that perfluorooctanoic acid is not used in the manufacture of goods and products; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of regulations on the use of that acid.

Rebecca Pow:

Perfluorooctanoic acid, known as PFOA, its salts and PFOA-related compounds, was listed as a persistent organic pollutant (POP) and banned from use under the UN Stockholm Convention with a number of time-limited specific exemptions at the Conference of Parties in May 2019.

POPs are toxic, persist in the environment, bioaccumulate in humans and animals and have long-ranging properties. The ban on the manufacture, sale and use of PFOA will come into force in July 2020 through the POPs regulation.

The effectiveness of this legislation cannot be assessed until it is in force but UK regulators will be responsible for ensuring that these regulations are adhered to and emissions monitoring will include PFOA.

■ Pest Control: Private Property

Caroline Nokes:

[\[15141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what powers local authorities have to tackle vermin outbreaks in private properties.

Rebecca Pow:

Managing problems with rats and mice is the responsibility of the owner or occupier of the property where the problem occurs. Insofar as local authorities are owners and occupiers of property, they have the same powers to control rats and mice as any other owner or occupier.

To address public health risk, the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 makes local authorities responsible for ensuring that their districts are kept, so far as practicable, free from rats and mice. In meeting this obligation, a local authority may serve a notice on the owner or occupier of land requiring them to take such steps as may be specified in the notice to destroy rats and mice on their land. Where necessary, the local authority has the power to take those steps as specified in a notice themselves and recover from the owner or occupier any expenses reasonably incurred in doing so. The 1949 Prevention of Damage by Pests Act also requires occupiers of land, other than agricultural land, to give notice in writing to the local authority of rodent infestations.

■ Plastics: Marine Environment

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to tackle plastic pollution in British waters.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is making great strides in tackling marine plastic pollution, and we have made some good progress. In 2018, our ban on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products helped to stop billions of tiny pieces of plastic entering the ocean. Our charge for single-use carrier bags has also led to a 90% reduction in plastic bag usage and a reduction of plastic bags surveyed on the seabed.

Our 25 Year Environment Plan establishes our target of reducing all forms of marine plastic pollution where possible, and our Resources and Waste Strategy sets out how we will achieve this. We have committed to introducing a deposit return scheme to encourage the reuse of items prevalent in marine litter, and we will explore the use of Extended Producer Responsibility schemes to incentivise innovation for items such as plastic packaging and fishing gear.

We collaborate closely with our neighbouring countries through the OSPAR Convention to reduce the flow of waste into the North-east Atlantic. We are delivering on our commitments in the Marine Litter Regional Action Plan and leading on efforts to tackle the issue of abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear.

■ **Plastics: Waste**

Caroline Nokes:

[\[1950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the amount of plastic waste being sent to landfill.

Rebecca Pow:

Permitted sites are required to submit their waste data to the Environment Agency (EA) and this represents the main data available on waste that goes to landfill. This data categorises waste according to the European Waste Catalogue (EWC).

Under EWC, only a limited number of categories are clearly identifiable as plastic waste. The EA was notified that 82,358 tonnes of waste identifiable as plastic was sent to landfill facilities in 2018.

However, the vast majority of waste received at landfill sites is reported as mixed waste, for example municipal waste. It will contain a proportion of plastic waste. The EA is not able to estimate plastic content of mixed waste and other EWC categories and cannot reliably provide the total plastic waste disposed to landfill.

In our Resources and Waste Strategy, we committed to landfilling 10% or less of the municipal waste generated by 2035 and to implementing measures that will improve the quality and quantity of plastic waste collected for recycling, and ultimately lead to less plastic waste sent to landfill. The Environment Bill sets out provisions to improve the separate collection of recyclable waste (including plastic packaging waste); for example, from 2023 all collectors of waste will be required to collect a core set of materials, including plastics, for recycling from households, non-domestic, and commercial and industrial premises.

■ **Roads: Litter**

Matt Western:

[\[19037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to (a) introduce penalty points for roadside littering and (b) bring forward legislative proposals to require delivery and haulage companies to equip vehicles with bins for use by employees.

Rebecca Pow:

It is a criminal offence to throw down, drop or otherwise deposit litter, whether from a vehicle or otherwise. It is up to employers to determine whether they need to provide specific equipment or facilities to their employees to enable them to comply with the law.

With effect from April 2018, we have introduced new powers enabling councils in England (outside London) to issue civil fixed penalties of between £65 to £150 to the keepers of vehicles from which litter is thrown. Councils in London already had similar powers. This enables them to take action against the offence, even when the precise offender cannot be identified beyond reasonable doubt.

We have no plans to introduce penalty points (endorsements) for littering offences, nor to require employers to provide bins in vehicles.

■ **Rodents: Pest Control**

Caroline Nokes: [\[15140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to section 2(1) of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1947, if he will issue guidance to residents on the steps they can take to hold local authorities to account for their duty to take such steps as may be necessary to secure so far as practicable that their district is kept free from rats and mice.

Rebecca Pow:

The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that their areas are kept, so far as practicable, free from rats and mice.

Should Defra become aware that a local authority is failing to discharge its responsibilities, Defra has certain default powers to initiate action.

■ **Waste Disposal**

Caroline Nokes: [\[1953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of residual waste sent to landfill, incineration and transfer stations in 2019 could have been recycled.

Rebecca Pow:

We do not hold this information. The main data on waste that goes to landfill, incineration and transfer stations is from the permitted site returns that are submitted to the Environment Agency. The way that the data is reported for particular waste categories means it is not possible to make reliable estimates for the amount of waste received at permitted waste sites that could have been recycled.

■ **Waste Management**

Ian Lavery: [\[15174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the capacity of waste processing facilities.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's current view on the adequacy of capacity of waste processing facilities at a national level is set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) in section 3.2.2. Waste planning authorities are responsible for considering capacity needs at a local level and planning accordingly. The RWS can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/resources-and-waste-strategy-for-england>

■ Water Companies: Carbon Emissions

Gareth Thomas:

[\[1851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to encourage water companies to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing our natural environment and reducing carbon emissions plays an important part in this commitment. The UK is the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the economy by 2050. The Government is leading the way and engaging with industry, including the water industry, local government and the public to meet our targets.

Last year, English water companies became the first industry to make a collective commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, as part of the Public Interest Commitment by the industry body, Water UK. The Government welcomes the industry's ambitious target and will be working closely with them to provide support to deliver on it.

Over the next five years, many water companies have made commitments in their business plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions and increase renewable energy. For example, Yorkshire Water will increase the amount of renewable energy it generates from biogas by 15%, and South East Water will reduce its carbon emissions by 68%.

Ofwat, the independent water regulator, has also challenged the industry to be more innovative and made available up to £200 million through an innovation competition. This is to incentivise water companies to collaborate with each other and with other companies in their supply chains to effectively address the challenges facing the sector in a cost-effective and sustainable way, such as reducing emissions and reaching net zero targets.

We hope the progress made by the water industry, as an energy-intensive infrastructure industry, will lead the way for other sectors to develop their own commitments through cross-sector collaboration and mutual learning.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Armenia: Gold

Jon Trickett:

[\[18469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made representations to the Government of Armenia on the Amulsar gold mine.

Wendy Morton:

British Embassy Yerevan officials regularly make representations to the Government of Armenia on a range of issues.

■ Cameroon: Human Rights

Louise Haigh:

[\[18745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the UK Government plans to take to ensure that (a) alleged human rights abuses in South Cameroon are fully investigated and (b) the perpetrators of any such abuses are held to account.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. These regions suffer from high levels of violence, which have driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. We have consistently called for an end to the violence, and for investigations into all reports of human rights violations. On 19 February, I issued a statement about the appalling attacks on 14 February and called for an urgent and transparent investigation so that the perpetrators can be held accountable.

We continue to shine a spotlight on the crisis and raise our concerns on human rights in Cameroon at the highest levels, including with the Government of Cameroon, in multinational fora and with international partners including the US and France. At the UN Security Council (UNSC) on 6 December 2019, the UK expressed concern over the crisis, calling for an end to human rights abuses, and for humanitarian access to affected people. At the UNSC on 12 February, the UK highlighted the significant impact of the crisis on children.

The UK continues to support all credible peacebuilding initiatives and remains ready to work with the Government of Cameroon, and international partners, to bring peace to the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions.

■ China: Uighurs

Afzal Khan:

[\[18985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions (a) he has had with Cabinet colleagues on Hikvision's alleged involvement in human rights abuses against Uighur Muslims in China.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of reports linking Hikvision to the human rights situation in Xinjiang. The Foreign Secretary has not discussed these reports with Cabinet Colleagues, however we frequently raise our serious concerns about the situation in Xinjiang with the Chinese authorities and at the UN, and will continue to do so. Through our Overseas Business Guidance we encourage any UK business involved in investing in Xinjiang to consider conducting appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support, or risk being seen to be supporting, any human rights violations or abuses.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo: Democracy

Jo Stevens:

[\[18794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to promote democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

The UK is committed to promoting democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and continues to work with international partners to press the DRC Government to improve political space, confirm release of political prisoners, recognise people's right to peaceful protest and refrain from using excessive force against protestors. The UK funds the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to build the capacity of the DRC Parliament and improve evidence-based law making and democratic accountability. In 2019 we also funded a local NGO to improve monitoring of violations against press freedom. More broadly, the UK continues to fund efforts to support stability and security as well as human rights in DRC through contributions to the UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO, humanitarian funding and through the Department for International Development conflict programming supporting stabilisation and peacebuilding in the East.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Research

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[14980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much and what proportion of total departmental spending his Department and its agencies spent on research and development in each year since 2010-11.

Wendy Morton:

From 2016-17 the figures requested form part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's annual report submitted to Parliament. The research and development amount is separately disclosed in Standard Operating Procedures Note 2.1. Outturn for the 2019-20 financial year will be available when the 2019-20 accounts are laid in July 2020. Prior to 2016-17 there was no disclosure requirement and the numbers were not collected.

The figures are:

	£000
2016-17	3,928
2017-18	6,056
2018-19	6,447

Prior to 2017-18 staff costs were measured on a different basis.

■ Gaza**Emily Thornberry:**[\[15014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the United Nations' assessment that Gaza will be uninhabitable by the year 2020.

James Cleverly:

We continue to encourage the reconciliation process in which the Palestinian Authority resumes control of Gaza and restores effective and accountable governance; and that Israel lifts its restrictions in order to ease the suffering of ordinary Palestinians and allow the Gazan economy to grow. We encourage the PA, Israel and regional/international actors to put forward long-term sustainable proposals for ending Hamas' rule. In 2019/20 DFID will provide £16 million in humanitarian assistance to Gaza, which will help support the health system, including improved trauma care, and contribute to emergency food aid for around 1.2 million vulnerable people. To help address the underlying causes of the humanitarian situation we are investing to build the capacity of Gaza's water and energy services and to address barriers to trade. Ultimately, Gaza's challenges can only be resolved with a political solution that delivers peace, stability and the easing of movement and access restrictions.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Christian Matheson:**[\[1956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision by the Government of Israel to ban export of Palestinian agricultural products on Palestinian farmers in the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

The UK is concerned about the impact of recent Israeli trade restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The British Government strongly supports the principle of free trade. British businesses should be free to import Palestinian products without barriers. Our 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.

■ Jamal Khashoggi**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[18609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will introduce Magnitsky-style sanctions against the people responsible for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

James Cleverly:

Jamal Khashoggi's killing was a terrible crime, and his family deserve to see justice done. Saudi Arabia must hold all those responsible to account and ensure such an atrocity can never happen again. We have set out our grave concerns - both publicly and privately - and will continue to do so. We have announced our intention to establish a UK autonomous Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky'-style) sanctions regime. The regulations will come into force in the coming months. It is not appropriate to confirm who may be designated under the sanctions regime before designations are made; to do this could reduce the impact of the designations.

■ Judith MacGregor**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[18391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has commissioned Dame Judith MacGregor to conduct a review of consular cases.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) regularly seeks feedback to consider where it might do more to support British citizens in particularly difficult circumstances. With this in mind, the former Foreign Secretary asked Dame Judith MacGregor to carry out a review of how the FCO handles complex consular cases. This was completed last year, and focused on policy rather than the detail of specific cases, although Dame Judith did meet a number of families to hear about their experience.

■ Libya: Arms Trade**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[18612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Emirati counterpart on reports of arms embargo violations in Libya by the United Arab Emirates.

Mr Virendra Sharma:[\[18613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on the political situation in Libya on reports that the United Arab Emirates is arming Field Marshal Khalifa Hifter's Libyan Arab Armed Forces.

James Cleverly:

The UK is clear that external involvement in the Libya conflict is undermining UN efforts to end the fighting and bring the parties back to the negotiating table. We take

very seriously all reports of violations of the UN arms embargo, including the findings of the UN Panel of Experts. The Government is in frequent contact with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) about the situation in Libya. The Foreign Secretary discussed it with his Emirati counterpart, Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed, on 21 January. The UK and UAE supported the conclusions of the Berlin conference on Libya on 19 January that called for an end to external military support to the parties in Libya.

■ Libya: Human Rights

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[18611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government will impose sanctions on people found guilty by the International Criminal Court of human rights violations in Libya.

James Cleverly:

Whilst arrest warrants have been issued, no individual has yet been convicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes in Libya. The UK strongly supports the work of the ICC to hold accountable those responsible for the most serious crimes in Libya. The UK continues, with our partners in the international community, to consider potential sanctions on individuals responsible for human rights violations or abuses in Libya.

■ Middle East: Overseas Aid

Theresa Villiers: [\[18534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that Official Development Assistance is not used directly or indirectly to pay for pensions for terrorist offenders in the Middle East.

James Cleverly:

All Government programme spend in the Middle East, in accordance with standard HMG programme management procedures, is subject to due diligence, risk management and continuous review throughout design, procurement and implementation to ensure funds are disbursed and used appropriately. This is monitored via a range of programme management tools and scrutinised through HMG governance structures.

■ Motor Sports and Human Rights: Saudi Arabia

Catherine West: [\[669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made representations to the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile on plans for a Formula One race in Saudi Arabia and the human rights record of that country.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 24 February 2020]: The UK has not made any representations to the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) about plans for a Formula One

race in Saudi Arabia, as this is a matter between the FIA and the Saudi Arabian Government. The UK and Saudi Arabia have a longstanding bilateral relationship, based on a number of pillars including trade; investment; defence; security; energy; and shared concerns about regional issues. No aspect of our relationship with Saudi Arabia prevents us from speaking frankly about human rights. We raise concerns regularly with the Saudi Arabian authorities through Ministerial and diplomatic channels, including our Ambassador and our Embassy in Riyadh.

■ Politics and Government

James Murray:

[\[13562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) criteria and (b) guidance his Department uses to define the (i) characteristics, (ii) security and (iii) borders of a sovereign state.

Nigel Adams:

The criteria for statehood were set out in a written answer to a PQ on 16 November 1989 by Sir Tim Sainsbury, then a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister, who provided that "we consider a State should have, and seem likely to continue to have, a clearly defined territory with a population, a Government who are able of themselves to exercise effective control of that territory, and independence in their external relations". This is based on the criteria for statehood set out in the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States 1933, namely: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other states.

Recognition is a unilateral, political act and there is no legal obligation to recognise another entity as a state. Recognition is something that Her Majesty's Government can choose to grant at a time of her choosing, if at all.

■ Sanctions

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[18608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress the Government has made in bringing forward a Magnitsky-style amendment to the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018.

Nigel Adams:

We have announced our intention to establish a Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky-style') sanctions regime in the coming months. We will do this by laying in Parliament a Statutory Instrument (SI) under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. Designing the first piece of UK autonomous sanctions legislation is complex, and worth taking time to get this right.

A global sanctions regime will allow us to respond to serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world. We are a global leader in the promotion and protection of human rights and we want to demonstrate that the United Kingdom can be a force for good in the world. A human rights sanctions regime will help support

our human rights objectives. The sanctions regime is not intended to target individual countries, but those who commit serious human rights violations or abuses anywhere in the world.

■ Saudi Arabia: Political Prisoners

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[18610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Saudi Arabia on the ongoing detention of (a) Prince Turki bin Abdullah, (b) Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz bin Salman and (c) other activists and senior officials.

James Cleverly:

We continue to monitor the cases of political detainees in Saudi Arabia. We raise concerns about individual cases regularly, using a range of Ministerial and diplomatic channels, including our Embassy in Riyadh.

■ Seas and Oceans: Environment Protection

Siobhan Baillie:

[\[14806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help to protect the oceans; what role the Government will have in the forthcoming UN global ocean treaty negotiations; and which (a) Ministers and (b) officials will be involved in those negotiations.

James Duddridge:

The UK is leading the way on ocean protection. The Blue Belt Programme is on track to protect over 4 million square kilometres of ocean around the Overseas Territories before the end of the year. The Government has committed to extend this programme. We are also working closely with Commonwealth partners through the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme (CMEP) to support sustainable development of their marine economies; and the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance (CCOA) to reduce marine plastic pollution, amongst other initiatives. The Government is committed to further action to protect the ocean including through the £500 million Blue Planet Fund.

My Department and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have been closely involved in the negotiation of a new Implementing Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction - the BBNJ Agreement - as an important step forward in addressing the challenges that the ocean faces. The UK is pressing for an ambitious Agreement to be concluded in 2020. It will be a key mechanism in enabling the designation of at least 30 per cent of the global ocean as Marine Protected Areas by 2030. A joint FCO-DEFRA team of officials will represent the UK in these talks based on positions agreed by ministers.

■ Venezuela: Politics and Government

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[18734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage a democratic resolution to the situation in Venezuela.

Wendy Morton:

We maintain regular discussions with key actors on Venezuela following the United Kingdom's recognition of Juan Guaido as constitutional interim President of Venezuela. Through our Ambassador in Caracas and internationally, we have been working closely with like-minded partners - including on a sanctions regime imposed by the EU. We are also working with the US and the regional Lima Group to encourage a peaceful resolution of the current crisis and a democratic transition through free and fair elections.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Cancer: Health Education

Stephanie Peacock:

[19022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to increase public awareness of the symptoms of (a) pancreatic and (b) other less survivable cancers.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has run several 'Be Clear on Cancer' (BCOC) campaigns to help improve early detection of cancer. These campaigns can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/be-clear-on-cancer/>

Several factors are considered when deciding which campaigns to develop and run, with one of the main criteria being the scope to save lives through earlier diagnosis. This can only be effective through broad awareness campaigns if the cancer has a high enough incidence to be able to impact upon through marketing campaigns, as well as a clear early sign or symptom that the public can act upon should it arise.

In 2017, PHE also ran a pilot campaign in the East and West Midlands which focussed on a range of abdominal symptoms, such as diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort that can be indicative of several cancers, including pancreatic cancer. Further information on the pilot is available at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/16-be-clear-on-cancer/Abdominal%20Symptoms%20Regional%20Pilot>

PHE is currently undertaking new data analysis and research to determine the future direction of BCOC activity.

■ Cancer: Research**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[19021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle inequalities in research funding allocated to different forms of cancer.

Helen Whately:

As with other Government funders of health research, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

The NIHR's cancer research expenditure has risen from £101 million in 2010/11 to £132 million in 2018/19. This constitutes the largest investment in a disease area.

■ Dental Services: Children**James Murray:** [\[19007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the factors that prevent children from accessing NHS dental services.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to improving access to National Health Service dental services and improving the oral health of children in England. The Government continues to carefully consider the barriers that children, particularly those most at risk, have in accessing NHS dental services.

NHS England is responsible for commissioning primary dental services according to local need.

NHS England is also supporting children to access NHS dental services with outreach schemes such as Starting Well run by NHS England targeting children in 13 high needs areas not yet in touch with a dentist.

■ Doctors: Registration**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[1187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer 8167, what checks his Department undertakes to ensure the accuracy of the GMC register.

Helen Whately:

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of medical practitioners in the United Kingdom. The GMC is independent of the Government but accountable to the UK Parliament. The Department does not have a role in assessing the accuracy of the GMC Register.

The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) oversees the work of the GMC. 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.

■ **Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[18466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the health risks of vaping and e-cigarettes.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[18467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the uptake of vaping and e-cigarettes by (a) young people and children and (b) other non-smokers.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[18468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the results of research of the University of Texas and University of North Texas, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems Marketing and Initiation among Youth and Young Adults, published in August 2019, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the (a) health risks of vaping to young people and (b) role that advertising plays in promoting vaping to young people.

Jo Churchill:

It remains the goal of the Government to maximise the public health opportunities presented by e-cigarettes to reduce smoking while managing any risks. United Kingdom regulated e-cigarettes are far less harmful than smoking, but they are not risk free. Research shows e-cigarettes are effective in helping some smokers to quit.

While experimentation with e-cigarettes is not uncommon among young people, current and regular use remains low. E-cigarettes in the UK are tightly regulated by the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR) and the Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 (NIP). These regulations aim to reduce the risk of harm to children; to protect against any risk of renormalisation of tobacco use; and to provide assurance on relative safety for users. The regulations include restrictions on mainstream TV and radio advertising; prevent sale to under 18s; and limit both tank sizes and nicotine content.

We continue to monitor evidence on e-cigarettes. As part of that, we are monitoring youth use closely and will take action, if necessary, to ensure that regular use among children and young people does not increase, and that e-cigarettes do not become a gateway to tobacco use. The Government has a statutory obligation to conduct post implementation reviews of TRPR by May 2021 and NIP later this spring. We continue to keep the evidence base on e-cigarettes under review and the next Public Health England annual review on e-cigarettes will be published next month.

■ Food: Packaging**Geraint Davies:****[18442]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the (a) level of per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances in paper and cardboard food packaging and (b) potential effect of those substances on (i) human health and (ii) the environment.

Jo Churchill:

Whilst fluorinated compounds from food contact materials such as paper and board have not raised specific safety concerns to date, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) regularly reviews new information on this subject. The European Food Safety Authority has just published its draft Opinion on the 'Risk to human health related to the presence of perfluoroalkyl substances in food' on Monday 24 February 2020 and it can be found at the following link:

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/public-consultation-draft-scientific-opinion-risks-human-health>

The FSA will consider this new Opinion and whether any risk management action is required.

■ General Practitioners: Correspondence**Catherine West:****[18809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the timely sending of vital medical correspondence to GPs.

Edward Argar:

The timely provision of medical correspondence to general practitioners (GPs) is vital; therefore, there are clear requirements in the current NHS Standard Contract (at Service Condition 11) for hospitals to supply patients' discharge summaries to GPs, electronically, within 24 hours of discharge – and to supply letters following outpatient clinic attendance (where clinically required) within seven days of attendance.

■ General Practitioners: Houghton and Sunderland South**Bridget Phillipson:****[18676]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many full-time equivalent clinical staff there were in each GP practice in Houghton and Sunderland South constituency in 2018-19.

Jo Churchill:

The data is not available in the format requested.

■ Hospitals: Radio

Steve McCabe:

[\[18447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide consistent levels of funding to support hospital radio.

Edward Argar:

Hospital radio can provide National Health Service patients and visitors with a positive experience at a time when they are feeling vulnerable. NHS trusts work locally with volunteers and organisations to provide this service. Decisions about funding the service are made most appropriately at a local level.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[18448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support is being provided to hospital departments whose waiting times exceed stated NHS targets.

Edward Argar:

The Department chairs weekly meetings with the National Health Service and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to provide support and oversight of national performance. The Urgent and Emergency Care reform programme and the Emergency Care Intensive Support Team provide dedicated expertise and support to hospital Trusts as needed.

The NHS Long Term Plan will transform urgent and emergency care, whilst NHS England's 'Operational and Planning Guidance for 2019/20' sets out deliverables against key performance areas. This has been supported by the NHS Funding Bill which provides a record financial commitment of £33.9 billion more each year by 2024.

Actions include:

- Increasing Same Day Emergency Care – to help ensure patients are not admitted to hospital unnecessarily;
- Over 1,000 more hospital beds open over winter this year than there were last year;
- Work to reduce extended lengths of stay and delayed transfers of care – supported by further £240 million again for adult social care via the Better Care Fund; and
- Increasing designation of Urgent Treatment Centres as an alternative for accident and emergency (A&E), to help manage increasing demand.

■ Lymphoedema: Health Services

Dan Jarvis:

[\[18766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the provision of adequate support for people with lymphoedema.

Dan Jarvis: [\[18767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to allocate funding to hospices for the provision of lymphoedema services.

Helen Whately:

The commissioning and funding of services for the treatment and care of people with lymphoedema is a local matter. People with lymphoedema can usually be managed through routine access to primary or second care services, and there is range of guidance, including an international consensus document and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance, to support local commissioning. Treatments include manual lymph drainage and decongestive lymphatic therapy.

As with lymphoedema services, funding for hospices is a local matter. Hospices receive some statutory funding from clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) for providing local services. CCGs are responsible ensuring that the services they commission meet the needs of their local population.

■ Medical Treatments: Innovation

Anne Marie Morris: [\[18742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the scope is of the Innovative Medicines Fund.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[18743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria will a medicine need to meet in order to be considered for the Innovative Medicines Fund.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[18744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timescale is for the implementation of the Innovative Medicines Fund.

Jo Churchill:

The Cancer Drugs Fund will be extended to create a new Innovative Medicines Fund so that doctors can use the most advanced, life-saving treatments for conditions such as autoimmune disease or cancer, or for children with other rare diseases.

Detailed proposals for the new Innovative Medicines Fund are in development and will be consulted on in due course.

■ Menopause

Peter Kyle: [\[18641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department provides for women going through the menopause.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

To help ensure women receive the best possible care, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published a guideline on the diagnosis and treatment of

the menopause in November 2015. This set out the support, information and treatments needed to address the often debilitating symptoms that women suffer.

Recently in December 2019, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists published 'Better for Women' which calls for a life course approach and includes a focus on general health during and after the menopause.

The Government will continue to encourage employers to rise to the challenge by creating supportive and flexible ways to help those living with these conditions.

■ **Mental Health Act 1983**

Geraint Davies:

[\[18439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists on amending the Mental Health Act 1983.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No discussions have taken place between the Department and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists on amending the Mental Health Act 1983.

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. Following the White Paper, there will be an opportunity for interested parties to feed in their views on the proposals.

A Bill to amend the Act will be introduced in due course.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Munira Wilson:

[\[18906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to define a national (a) access and (b) waiting times standard for wider child and adolescent mental health services.

Munira Wilson:

[\[18907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February to Question 12329 on Mental Health Services: Children and Young People, for what reasons a national access and waiting time standard for child and adolescent mental health services has not yet been defined.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Twelve areas have been chosen to pilot a four-week waiting time for access to all children and young people's mental health services. There are already two condition-specific waiting time standards that apply to children and young people with eating disorders or psychosis.

The current four-week waiting time pilots will test not only what it takes to achieve and maintain a four-week waiting time, but also how best to define and measure this access to specialist children and young people's mental health services. The pilots

will also evaluate the impact of a four-week waiting time on any other services and assess any impact on wider outcomes for children and young people. This will help inform any future decisions about a national waiting time standard for children and young people's mental health services as a whole.

Munira Wilson: [\[18908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12329 on Mental Health Services: Children and Young People, in what format that information is collected.

Munira Wilson: [\[18910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 12333 on Mental Health Services: Children and Young People, in what format that information is collected.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Neither the Department nor NHS Digital collect data on waiting times for access to mental health services for children and young people as a whole.

However, information is collected on waiting times for access for children and young people experiencing eating disorders or for any patients, including children and young people, experiencing a first episode of psychosis.

Munira Wilson: [\[18909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February to Question 12328 on Mental Health Services: Children, what methodology his Department used to calculate the estimate of 345,000 children and young people accessing mental health support by 2023/24.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24 sets out the increased funding and indicative workforce underpinning the NHS Long Term Plan commitments. This includes a projection of 345,000 additional children and young people aged 0-25 accessing support. This number is based on estimates of what the increase in workforce capacity will help achieve across the first five years of the Long Term Plan period, and are informed by practice in existing services.

As the Implementation Plan sets out, mental health care will be to the additional 345,000 through a wide range of new and enhanced services via National Health Service-funded mental health services and school- or college-based Mental Health Support Teams. NHS England is establishing a metric to monitor progress and will be testing this over the coming year.

■ **Midwives: Migrant Workers**

Alex Sobel: [\[18955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the age profile was of (a) all NHS midwives and (b) those NHS midwives identified as nationals of an EU member

state at the (i) most recent month for which figures are available and (ii) the equivalent month in each year since 2010.

Helen Whately:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs)¹, but not staff working in primary care or in general practitioner (GP) surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The attached tables show the number of EU27 and all nationality midwives in National Health Service trusts and CCGs broken down by age bands.

Note:

¹ CCGs are NHS bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area. They are made up of a governing body directly employed by the CCG and local GP practice members within the area of the CCG.

Attachments:

1. pq18955 table [pq18955 formatted Midwives age breakdown.xlsx]

■ **NHS: Agency Workers**

Greg Smith:

[\[15113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many individual contractors businesses have been assessed under IR35 rules for the supply of agency staff to NHS Trusts.

Edward Argar:

Information on how many individual contractors' businesses have been assessed under IR35 rules for the supply of agency staff to National Health Service trusts is not held by the Department.

■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Research**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[18378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to (a) allocate additional funding from the public purse to research on pancreatic cancer; (b) launch a campaign to help enable earlier identification of the symptoms of that cancer; and (c) ensure consistency in the application of treatment and care standards to people diagnosed with that cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The Department invests £1 billion per year in health research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The following table shows the NIHR's Programme funding for pancreatic cancer in each of the last three years.

YEAR	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	TOTAL
NIHR Research Programmes total	£350,870	£411,444	£534,170	£1,296,484

In addition, the NIHR Clinical Research Network supported 62 studies over the last three years.

Several factors are considered when deciding which 'Be Clear on Cancer' (BCOC) campaigns to develop and run, with one of the main criteria being the scope to save lives through earlier diagnosis. This can only be effective through broad awareness campaigns if the cancer has a high enough incidence to be able to impact upon through marketing campaigns, as well as a clear early sign or symptom that the public can act upon should it arise.

In 2017, Public Health England (PHE) ran a pilot campaign in the East and West Midlands which focussed on a range of abdominal symptoms, such as diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort that can be indicative of several cancers, including pancreatic cancer. In 2017, PHE also ran a pilot campaign in the East and West Midlands which focussed on a range of abdominal symptoms, such as diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort that can be indicative of several cancers, including pancreatic cancer. Further information on the pilot is available at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/16-be-clear-on-cancer/Abdominal%20Symptoms%20Regional%20Pilot>

PHE is currently undertaking new data analysis and research to determine the future direction of BCOC activity.

Over the next three years every patient with cancer will receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan based on holistic needs assessment, end of treatment summaries and health and wellbeing information and support. All patients, including those with secondary cancers, will have access to the right expertise and support, including a Clinical Nurse Specialist or other support worker.

■ Perfluorooctanoic Acid: Health Hazards

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[18778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the dangers that perfluorooctanoic acid poses to the body.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has made no specific assessment of the implications on policies of the dangers that perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) poses to the body.

■ Suicide

Barbara Keeley:

[\[18394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the fifth progress report of the preventing suicide in England: cross-Government outcomes strategy to save lives.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We will publish the fifth progress report and updated cross-Government suicide prevention workplan in 2020.

■ Thalidomide

Jack Lopresti:

[\[1245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide an update on the status of the Thalidomide Health Grant; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to meeting the additional health needs of thalidomiders and to give them the same opportunities that others enjoy. The provision of the Thalidomide Health Grant is a central element of this. The current multi-year settlement continues for a further three years running until the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

■ Urology: Vacancies

Alex Cunningham:

[\[18680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2020 to Question 8275 on urology: vacancies, what recent estimate his Department has made of consultant vacancies in urology.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

HOME OFFICE

■ Home Office: Legal Costs

Hannah Bardell:

[\[11631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department spent on legal fees in each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

Data for professional fees expenditure is published in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts but is not disclosed separately for legal fees.

Home Office Annual Accounts 2018-19 - page 135

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807126/6.5571_HO_Annual_Report_201920_WEB.PDF

■ Home Office: Written Questions

Hannah Bardell: [\[18768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to answer Question 11631 tabled on 3 February 2020 by the Hon Member for Livingstone.

Victoria Atkins:

The response for UIN 11631 was given on 26 February 2020.

■ Immigrants: English Language

Stephen Timms: [\[18485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are banned from the UK as a result of accusations of cheating by ETS in relation to its Toeic test in the period 2011-14.

Kevin Foster:

The exact information requested is not held centrally by the Home Office in a way that allows us to answer this question without manually checking individual case records which could only be undertaken at disproportionate cost.

Stephen Timms: [\[18486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent from the public purse on defending (a) appeals and (b) judicial reviews in cases where applicants were refused leave to remain on grounds of cheating in a Toeic English language test.

Kevin Foster:

The exact information requested is not held centrally by the Home Office in a way that allows us to answer this question without manually checking individual case records which could only be undertaken at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office took commercial action against the provider which resulted in them agreeing, after negotiations, to pay a contribution of £1.6 million towards the Home Office's costs incurred as a result of this issue.

■ Immigration Controls

Stella Creasy: [\[18815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to undertake an equality impact assessment of the points-based system announced by her Department on 19 February 2020 in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Stella Creasy:

[\[18816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken an equality assessment of the points-based system for immigration announced by her Department on 19 February 2020.

Stella Creasy:

[\[18817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to undertake an assessment of the effect of the points-based system for immigration announced by her Department on 19 February 2020 on (a) gender equality, (b) sectors that employ a high level of women, (c) the care sector and (d) the hospitality sector.

Kevin Foster:

The Government, in delivering on its manifesto commitments, has considered relevant views, evidence, and analysis in finalising this policy, in particular the report of the Migration Advisory Committee, which was published in January. A programme of engagement will begin in March to raise awareness of the new system.

We have considered equalities impacts of the points-based immigration system in line with our public sector equality duties and, as now, we will keep all immigration routes under review.

■ Immigration Controls: Airports

Alyn Smith:

[\[19035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department provides to UK Border Force staff on when to initiate in-depth questioning of people arriving at airports who (a) hold and (b) do not hold a valid visa.

Chris Philp:

Under Schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971, Border Force staff appointed as Immigration Officers may examine any person arriving in the UK to establish their nationality and if they are not UK nationals, determine whether they require leave to enter and on what terms this leave should be given.

If the passenger is in possession of an entry clearance or visa, officers may examine the passenger to establish whether the purpose of the visit remains the same as that specified; there has been a change in circumstances since that leave was given; false information or material deception was used to obtain the visa; or there are medical grounds that should result in the cancellation of the visa. The passenger may also be examined by an immigration officer for the purpose of determining whether it would be conducive to the public good for their entry clearance or leave to be cancelled.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Tim Farron:

[\[18585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to inform employers of the entitlement to work of people with pre-settled status.

Kevin Foster:

We have a comprehensive and ongoing programme of engagement with businesses of all sizes, across the UK, to ensure they fully understand their obligations as employers of EU nationals.

We have made it clear there is no requirement for employers to differentiate between those with settled and pre-settled status. EU citizens continue to be able to use their passport or national identity card to evidence their right to work and this will not change until 30 June 2021.

Employers must not discriminate between those who have been granted a status under the EU Settlement Scheme and those who have not.

Further guidance on right to work checks after 30 June 2021 will be issued in due course.

Stella Creasy:[\[18663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that EU citizens who are homeless and living in the UK complete the settled status application process.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has put in place measures to ensure the EU Settlement Scheme is accessible to all vulnerable applicants, including those who are homeless. A user group of external stakeholders who represent the needs of potentially vulnerable individuals, including those who are homeless, has been established to work with the Home Office to ensure the right support and arrangements are in place. There is provision in policy to allow for a wide range of evidence to be provided by applicants in order to prove their residence including confirmation from a charity or support group. There is also provision for applicants to apply without the standard evidence of identity and nationality where they cannot provide it due to compelling practical or compassionate reasons or circumstances beyond their control which may include being homeless or destitute. The Home Office has introduced a range of support including up to £9 million grant funding for 57 voluntary and community organisations to ensure those that require the most support to apply to the scheme can access it. This includes funding allocated to charities that support the homeless.

■ Immigration: Married People**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[18990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to assess the effect of the minimum income requirement regime on the integration of non-EEA spouses of British citizens.

Bambos Charalambous:[\[18991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the findings of her Department's most recent review of the minimum income requirement.

Kevin Foster:

In February 2017, the Supreme Court upheld the lawfulness of the minimum income requirement, which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration, ruling it strikes a fair balance between the interests of those wishing to sponsor a partner to settle in the UK and of the community in general. The Court found the minimum income requirement is not a breach of the right to respect for private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and is not discriminatory.

Whilst we continue to keep the Family Immigration Rules under review, and make adjustments should these prove necessary, our overall assessment is the Rules, including the minimum income requirement, are having the appropriate impact and are helping to ensure public confidence in the immigration system.

Metropolitan Police: Biometrics**Rushanara Ali:****[18735]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who were stopped during the recent public automated facial recognition technology trials by the Metropolitan Police were wrongly identified.

Kit Malthouse:

The Metropolitan Police Service publish data about their use of live facial recognition on their website -

<https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/central/advice/met/facial-recognition/latest-past-deployment-data.pdf>.

Migrant Workers**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:****[19020]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the policy paper entitled The UK's points-based immigration system: policy statement, published on 19 February 2020, what the requirements will be for employers to become approved sponsors.

Kevin Foster:

Requirements for employers to become approved sponsors can be found in the 'Tiers 2 and 5: guidance for sponsors' at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-2-or-5-worker-guidance-for-employers.

We keep this guidance under review and will make changes in due course to reflect the introduction of the new points-based immigration system, from January 2021.

■ Refugees**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [19006]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the move-on period for newly recognised refugees.

Chris Philp:

Whilst there are currently no plans to extend the move-on period, the Government has been working on a number of important initiatives to ensure that newly recognised refugees are able to access benefits and housing promptly once their Home Office support ends. We are ensuring that this work takes into account the views of the key voluntary sector groups, including the British Red Cross.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence**Peter Kyle:** [18631]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date she plans to respond to her Department's consultation on violence and abuse toward shop staff.

Kit Malthouse:

We launched a call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop staff to help strengthen our understanding of the scale and extent of the issue. The call for evidence has now closed and we are carefully analysing the responses before deciding what further action may be required. During the Westminster Hall debate on 'Protection of retail workers', which took place on 11 February, I committed to publishing the government's response in March.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Ground Rent****Rosie Cooper:** [R] [18377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which companies have signed up to the Government's pledge to remove onerous ground rents.

Christopher Pincher:

The companies that have signed up to the Government's Public pledge for leaseholders are published on the gov.uk website and available to the public:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leaseholder-pledge/public-pledge-for-leaseholders>

■ Leasehold Advisory Service: Finance**Steve Reed:** [18678]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution of the then Parliamentary Under Secretary on 19 April 2018, official report, column 578, on Fire Safety Remedial Work: Leaseholder Liability,

what metrics his Department uses to assess the effectiveness of the increased Government funding provided to the Leasehold Advisory Service.

Christopher Pincher:

The Leasehold Advisory Service's published business plan contains objectives, Key Performance Indicators and metrics to assess the effectiveness of Government funding of all aspects of its service, including in relation to building safety. The business plan can be found here: <https://www.lease-advice.org/files/2019/07/LEASE-BUSINESS-PLAN-2019-20.pdf>.

■ **Local Government Finance**

Stephen McPartland:

[18788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the usable reserves held by each local authority in each year since 2010.

Luke Hall:

Local authorities are free to determine the level of reserves they hold on an annual basis and are accountable to their electorate for the decisions they make.

The financial framework is designed to ensure that adequate reserve levels are held by local authorities. This is done through legislation which requires local authorities to make an assessment annually on the adequacy of the financial reserves which are held. This aspect of the framework is crucial in ensuring that all local authorities hold sufficient unallocated reserves to meet unforeseeable financial risks

Local authorities report their usable reserves balances in a section of an annual Government return called 'Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing Final Outturn'. These returns are published annually on the GOV.UK website. Categories are broken down into unallocated amounts (as referred to above) and earmarked balances which will usually be set aside for specific purposes. The data collection also includes ring-fenced reserves. Attached is a link to that data source which contains links to each financial year's data on reserves including 2010/11.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>

■ **Towns Fund**

Justin Madders:

[18822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 October 2019 to Question 291442 on Towns Fund, if he will publish the (a) qualitative and (b) quantitative indicators of (i) income deprivation, (ii) skills, (iii) productivity and (iv) investment opportunities, used as part of the selection methodology referred to.

Mr Simon Clarke:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer of 13 February 2020 to Question UIN14834.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Brazil: Health Services****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[18387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to support improved (a) healthcare and (b) delivery of healthcare services to indigenous women in Brazil.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Prosperity Fund's Global Better Health Programme aims to strengthen the health system in Brazil through technical collaboration. In particular, the programme focuses on addressing the growing burden of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer; and driving improvements in quality of care to reduce infection, injury or premature death. This will directly benefit women and poorer groups who are often particularly affected as a result of these health challenges. The programme in Brazil is currently in the inception stage, as part of which we will consider with our country partners the likely impact of the programme on different demographic groups such as indigenous women.

■ Department for International Development: Departmental Responsibilities**Steve McCabe:** [\[18445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has to merge the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister has set out an ambitious programme to enhance the UK's global leadership and demonstrate that the UK is open, outward-looking and confident on the world stage.

A key element of this is the UK's continued commitment to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on international development.

The Prime Minister is particularly keen to ensure that this money is spent well and is aligned with the UK's foreign policy priorities. Therefore, he has appointed a fully joint junior DFID – FCO ministerial team.

■ Developing Countries: Vaccination**Alex Sobel:** [\[19015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to increase access to vaccines in the global south.

Wendy Morton:

Increasing equitable access to vaccines in the Global South, is the core goal of the UK's support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Our £1.44 billion of support to Gavi between 2016-2020 has reached 1.4 million individuals in 68 of the world's poorest

countries, saving their lives from vaccine-preventable diseases. Thanks to Gavi, coverage has risen substantially across these countries to 81%, a 22-percentage point increase from 2000. The UK's commitment to Gavi is also central to our work to end preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children by 2030.

The UK is proud to be hosting the Gavi Replenishment Conference on 3-4th June, to secure Gavi the funds it needs to immunise 300 million more children and save at least 7 million lives between 2021 and 2025.

Gavi's strategy for the next strategic period is focused on 'leaving no one behind with immunisation'. Gavi's next strategic period is critically important for the UK as we work together to improve intra-country equity and coverage of immunisation at a subnational level.

■ Private Infrastructure Development Group: Overseas Aid

Helen Hayes:

[18705]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate her Department has made of how much UK aid has been disbursed through the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG); and what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which the PIDG has funded projects involving (a) gas, (b) coal and (c) oil.

James Duddridge:

DFID has disbursed \$1,036 million to the Private Investment Development Group (PIDG) between 2002 and 2018.

During this 16-year period, PIDG has made a number of infrastructure investments in the poorest countries to increase access to power, some of which use fossil fuels to generate electricity. Of these investments, (a) \$396.6 million has been to projects using gas as a fuel source, (b) \$1.7 million using coal, (c) \$141.9 million using oil, and (d) \$210.2 million with mixed or hybrid fuel sources. The coal funding was for early-stage advisory services provided in 2008 to a prospective power project in Indonesia.

Over the same period, PIDG has invested \$711 million in renewable power projects.

PIDG does not invest in the extraction of fossil fuels, with the exception of one-off funding of \$500,000 (£273,000) in 2004 for technical assistance to the Government of Mozambique on the feasibility of establishing a coal mine in the town of Moatize in Mozambique. No follow-on funding was provided to support this project. PIDG's strategy now rules out any investing in coal.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Trade Agreements: Negotiations**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many and which countries her Department is currently in trade talks with.

Conor Burns:

The UK is working with countries around the world to improve our trade and investment relationships. We will begin formal negotiations for free trade agreements with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, as swiftly as possible. We are also interested in seeking accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Alongside this we are continuing our programme to replicate existing EU trade agreements, working with trading partners to ensure continuity for UK businesses following the transition period. And the UK is also building stronger relationships with key trading partners, such as China and India, through regular trade dialogues, including Joint Economic and Trade Committees.

■ Trade Promotion: Cuba

Gareth Thomas: [\[18499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what further steps she is planning to take to promote trade with Cuba.

Graham Stuart:

The Department of International Trade (DIT) is committed to building our relationships across the world as part of our Global Britain agenda.

We have appointed Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner to Latin America and the Caribbean (LatAC) to promote UK trade interests across the region including Cuba where we have a team based at the British Embassy. A LatAC Roadshow is planned in March for several UK regions to promote trade opportunities to UK companies.

■ UK Export Finance: Fossil Fuels

James Murray: [\[18982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the environmental impact of carbon emissions from UK Economy and Finance's investment in oil and gas projects abroad.

James Murray: [\[18983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she takes to assess the environmental impact of projects receiving funding from UK Economy and Finance.

Graham Stuart:

I am unaware of any organisation called UK Economy and Finance.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is committed to high standards of environmental, social and human rights (ESHR) risk management. It rigorously follows the requirements of the OECD Common Approaches and Equator Principles, which set the framework for export credit agencies and international financial institutions in managing such risks and impacts.

UKEF's specialist ESHR risk management team reviews relevant projects prior to UKEF taking a decision on whether to support. ESHR monitoring takes place throughout the lifetime of UKEF's support for such projects.

■ UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group

Sarah Olney:

[\[18709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when and where the next meeting of the UK US Trade Working Group is due to take place.

Greg Hands:

The UK-US Trade and Investment Working Groups were focused on strengthening our trade and investment relationship and laying the groundwork for potential free trade agreement before the UK had left the EU. Now that we have left the EU, we are able to begin negotiating a free trade agreement with the US. Details about the first round of negotiations will be made available to Parliament after our negotiating objectives have been published.

JUSTICE

■ Business: Fraud

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[1875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to respond to the corporate liability for economic crime: call for evidence consultation, which closed on 31 March 2017.

Alex Chalk:

The Government is considering the case for reforming the law on corporate criminal liability for economic crime and will publish a response to the Call for Evidence in due course.

■ Crown Court

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[18552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Crown court cases have been listed for mention in each of the last 18 months.

Chris Philp:

The table below shows the number of cases which have been listed for mention in the Crown court over the last 18 months:

APRIL 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2019

Month	Cases
Apr-18	4588
May-18	4423
Jun-18	4442
Jul-18	4562
Aug-18	4352
Sep-18	4318
Oct-18	4874
Nov-18	4801
Dec-18	3517
Jan-19	4601
Feb-19	4228
Mar-19	4529
Apr-19	4254
May-19	4565
Jun-19	4198
Jul-19	4710
Aug-19	4212
Sep-19	4298

Notes:

- 1. These data has been extracted from the Crown Court Xhibit database, and run until September-19 in line with published data.**
- 2. Xhibit is a live system and data can change over time.**
- 3. The hearing codes used to extract these data are those recorded by the court listing officer and reflect the hearing type as shown on the daily list.**
- 4. If a case has two or more hearings within the same month it has only been counted once. Should the hearings be on different months they have been counted in each month.**

■ Debt Collection

Catherine West:

[\[18388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 25 June 2019 to Question 265611 on Debt Collection, what his timescale is for responding to his Department's Review of enforcement agent (bailiff) reforms: call for evidence, published in November 2018; and what plans he has to issue new guidelines on the conduct of enforcement officers.

Alex Chalk:

In a Written Ministerial Statement on enforcement agent (bailiff) reform made to Parliament on 22 July 2019, the Government set out its initial response to the call for evidence which closed in February 2019. We have continued to engage with stakeholders in order to finalise our response. We plan to respond to the call for evidence in full in due course.

■ Offenders: Females

Daisy Cooper:

[\[2053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress he has made the development a national concordat on female offenders.

Lucy Frazer:

In the Female Offender Strategy, published in June 2018, we committed to publish a National Concordat on Female Offenders. We are making good progress and aim to publish the Concordat in the next few months. On 6 February, we held a workshop with members of the Advisory Board on Female Offenders where we shared our current working draft. We received many helpful comments and constructive feedback and are revising the document to take those suggestions into account.

The Concordat will set out how national organisations as well as local partners and services should be working together in partnership to identify and respond to the often multiple and complex needs of women who are in contact with, or at risk of coming into contact with, the criminal justice system.

■ Prostitution

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[18437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prosecutions and (b) convictions there have been for the offence of buying sex from a prostitute controlled for the gain of another person under section 14 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 since April 2010.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published the number of prosecutions and convictions under S.53A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as inserted by S.14 Policing and Crime Act 2009, for the calendar years 2013 – 2018 in the 'Proceedings and Outcomes by Home Office Code 2013 to 2018 data tool':

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802342/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2018.xlsx

- Select the Detailed offence 'Paying or promising to pay a person to provide sexual services, where that person is subject to exploitative conduct to induce or encourage them to provide those services' (or alternatively the Offence code '16702').

Prosecutions and convictions for this offence from 2010 to 2012 are in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 18437 table.xlsx]

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Borders: Northern Ireland****Simon Hoare:****[15053]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans the UK Government has to appoint (a) Ministers, (b) Northern Ireland Office officials and (c) Northern Ireland Civil Service officials to represent the UK on the Joint Consultative Working Group on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government is continuing to work through the details of how the Joint Committee and subordinate Specialised Committee on Ireland/Northern Ireland and Joint Consultative Working Group will operate. This includes the delegations at these fora.

■ Northern Ireland Executive: Select Committees**Simon Hoare:****[15052]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to paragraph 9 of Annex A to New Decade, New Approach, what role the UK Government has in determining the representatives of the Northern Ireland Executive that will attend meetings of the (a) UK-EU Specialised Committee and (b) Joint Committees.

Mr Robin Walker:

As set out in the New Decade, New Approach deal, the Government will ensure that representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive are invited to be part of the UK delegation in any meetings of the UK-EU Specialised or Joint Committees discussing Northern Ireland specific matters which are also being attended by the Irish Government as part of the European Union's delegation.

The UK Government is continuing to work through the exact details of this arrangement and will work with the Northern Ireland Executive to define this in the proper way.

SCOTLAND

■ City Region Deals: Clackmannanshire and Stirling

John Nicolson:

[\[18772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what progress he has made on the Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal.

Mr Alister Jack:

I am delighted to be able to confirm that we are making excellent progress and I, along with other partners, hope to sign the Stirling & Clackmannanshire City Region Full Deal on 26 February.

This will herald a programme of transformation for the Stirling & Clackmannanshire region, part of the £1.4 billion commitment that the UK Government has made to Deals across Scotland.

■ Food Banks: Scotland

David Linden:

[\[18984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether he plans to visit a food bank in (a) February and (b) March 2020.

Mr Alister Jack:

I currently have no plans to visit a food bank in my capacity as Secretary of State for Scotland in February and March 2020.

TRANSPORT

■ Airports: Carbon Emissions

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage airports to become carbon neutral.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government's climate change targets include airport emissions, and so airports will need to reach net zero by 2050.

Airport emissions are largely generated by surface access and power and heat generation, both of which will be addressed through measures targeted at those sectors. For example, this includes an investment of nearly £1.5 billion to support the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles, with grants available for plug-in vehicles and schemes to support chargepoint infrastructure. We are also consulting on bringing

forward our ambition to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans forward to 2035 or earlier, as per the advice of the Committee on Climate Change.

Airports are not legally responsible for emissions from aircraft operations.

On emissions from aircraft operations, we are planning to consult shortly to update the Government's position on aviation and climate change. It is critical that we consider how the aviation sector can play its part in delivering our net zero ambitions.

■ **Bus Services: East Midlands**

Claudia Webbe: [\[2010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the average number of passengers on public service bus routes in (a) the East Midlands, (b) Leicester and (c) Leicester East constituency.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department does not hold data on the average number of passengers per route at regional or parliamentary constituency level.

The average bus occupancy on local bus services was 12.5 in England in 2018/19, an increase from 12.2 in 2017/18 and 11.7 in 2009/10.

■ **Bus Services: Profits**

Steve Reed: [\[18679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department holds data on the level of profits made by bus operating companies in each year from 2010.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department does not hold data on the level of profits made by bus operating companies.

■ **Driving: Licensing**

Marion Fellows: [\[18626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how long it should take for a licence to be returned following a D2 application when all medical evidence has been submitted to the Driver Medical Team at the DVLA.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency expects it to take around 15 working days following receipt of a D2 application for a licence to be returned to the customer. This is provided that the medical information declared on the accompanying D4 medical report confirms the applicant meets the required medical standards and no further medical information is required.

■ Electric Vehicles

Grahame Morris:

[\[18503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) accessibility of electric vehicle infrastructure in areas of high density terrace housing.

Rachel Maclean:

The uptake of zero emission vehicles is a priority for this Government, to ensure we meet our net zero ambitions by 2050. Ensuring that motorists who do not have access to off-street parking are able to access electric vehicle chargepoints and having a reliable and easy-to-use public charging network are key for achieving the continued uptake of plug-in vehicles.

The On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) provides grant funding for local authorities towards the cost of installing on-street residential chargepoints for plug-in electric vehicles. In October 2019, the Secretary of State wrote to all local authorities encouraging them to send their strategies for infrastructure deployment and to take advantage of ORCS funding. Last month we announced that we are doubling the value of the On-street Residential Charging Scheme from £5 to £10 million, this could support as many as 3,600 chargepoints for motorists who do not have off-street parking.

Our manifesto stated that, along with the private sector, the Government will invest £1 billion in charging infrastructure – making sure that everyone is within 30 miles of a rapid charging station. Our jointly funded £400 million Chargepoint Infrastructure Investment Fund's first investment round, worth a total of £70 million, will ensure the delivery of a further 3,000 rapid charging devices by 2024, more than doubling the current number of rapid charging devices.

Grahame Morris:

[\[18507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to (a) help reduce the purchase cost of electric vehicles and (b) improve the electric vehicle infrastructure.

Rachel Maclean:

We are investing nearly £1.5bn between April 2015 and March 2021 to support the transition to zero emission motoring and have put in place a range of grant schemes, available in any urban or rural areas UK-wide, to support the installation of charging infrastructure. We will set out a vision by Spring 2020 for a core infrastructure network of rapid and high powered chargepoints along England's strategic road network.

The Government has put in place various grant funding schemes to assist with the up-front cost of purchasing eligible electric vehicles. Motorists who choose to make the switch to electric also benefit from lower Vehicle Excise Duty and, from April 2020, lower company car tax rates.

As part of our consultation to bring forward the end of sales of petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans, Government is asking for views on what measures are required to support this transition.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Eddie Hughes:

[\[15047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that the technology required to make the 2035 goal on electric cars feasible will deliver the (a) fast and (b) long lasting charging required to meet the time constraints of people's working day.

Rachel Maclean:

Along with the private sector, the Government will invest £1 billion in charging infrastructure – making sure that everyone is within 30 miles of a rapid charging station. In July 2019 work commenced to determine a vision for a core rapid charger network on England's strategic road network. This will report in Spring 2020. Highways England has committed £15m to ensure there are chargepoints (rapid where possible) every 20 miles on 95% of the Strategic Road Network by 2020. Our jointly funded £400 million Chargepoint Infrastructure Investment Fund's first investment round, worth a total of £70 million, will ensure the delivery of 3,000 rapid charging devices by 2024, more than doubling the current number of rapid charging devices.

As per our manifesto, on 4 February the Prime Minister announced that Government is consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time. The position reflects the independent Committee on Climate Change (CCC) advice that the phase out date should be 2035 or ideally 2030, and that only battery electric or other zero tailpipe emission vehicles should be permitted to be sold after this point. The CCC has advised that this is an important step in the UK's aim to end our contribution to climate change by 2050. Stakeholders will have a diverse range of views on this subject so the consultation process will help inform our thinking on what the appropriate measures to achieve a faster transition will need to be.

Grahame Morris:

[\[18505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the Government's policy is on the use of wireless electric vehicle charging points.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government recognises that the wireless charging of electric vehicles is fast becoming a commercial reality, with some premium manufacturers already offering static wireless charging products.

The development of wireless charging is an exciting prospect and one the Government is planning through our R&D programme. In July last year, we announced new investment for British engineering to develop electric chargepoint

infrastructure, with 12 projects set to receive almost £40 million to revolutionise the experience of owning an electric vehicle in the UK. Innovations to receive investment included electric vehicle wireless charging systems.

Investment in R&D projects like wireless charging is a key contributor to the Road to Zero Strategy and our mission to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacture of zero emission vehicles.

■ **Great Western Railway Line: Fares**

Anneliese Dodds: [\[18941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of Great Western Railway withdrawing from the easitNETWORK discount travel scheme on (a) traffic congestion and (b) air quality in Oxford East constituency.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[18942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has held with employers in Oxford that make the easitNETWORK discount travel scheme available to their employees on the effect of Great Western Railway withdrawing from that scheme.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[18943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial support his Department will provide to users of the easitNETWORK discount travel scheme when Great Western Railway withdraws from that scheme.

Grant Shapps:

Great Western Railway's (GWR's) withdrawal from easitNETWORK is a matter for the operator, and the Department has therefore made no assessment of its effect on traffic congestion or air quality and has had no discussions with employers in Oxford about this.

Any support for users of the easitNETWORK discount travel scheme when GWR withdraws from that scheme is also a matter for GWR.

■ **Heathrow Airport: Construction**

Sarah Olney: [\[18810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has undertaken to ensure that the expansion of Heathrow by over 700 aircraft each day is compatible with the Government's policy on achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is committed to setting a clear ambition for the aviation sector and is carefully considering the advice of the Committee on Climate Change.

We are planning to consult shortly on an update to the Government's position on aviation and climate change. It is critical that we consider how the sector can play its part in delivering our net zero ambitions, while continuing to thrive.

The Airports National Policy Statement guarantees that a new Northwest runway at Heathrow will only be built if an applicant for development consent can demonstrate that any increase in carbon emissions from the scheme will not materially impact the government's ability to meet its carbon reduction targets.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Kerry McCarthy: [\[18577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has plans to identify the ancient woodlands which could be affected by the northern sections of the high speed two route.

Andrew Stephenson:

Areas of ancient woodlands affected by HS2 are identified in the relevant Environmental Statement for each phase, with the Environmental Statements for Phases 1 and 2a already having been published. The Environmental Statement(s) for sections of the high speed two route to the north of these phases will be identified as part of the relevant Environmental Statement, which will be published when the respective Bills are deposited.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Iron and Steel

Gill Furniss: [\[18653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has established a minimum percentage of British-made steel to be used in the HS2 project.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 has huge potential to support growth across the UK and will promote regeneration, boost skills and generate new jobs. Our procurement process is open to all bidders with the relevant experience and required credentials and ensures value for money for the taxpayer.

HS2 Ltd has a continuing programme of engagement with local businesses, attending events arranged by local Chambers of Commerce and other networks to ensure that the procurement opportunities of the project are spread across all four nations of the United Kingdom.

■ Motor Vehicles: Fuels

Alun Cairns: [\[18675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made on the potential for synthetic fuel to drive motor vehicles to help meet the 2035 ban on diesel and petrol cars.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is consulting on ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if feasible. This is in line with advice from

the independent Committee on Climate Change on what is required to achieve net zero emissions in 2050. Existing vehicles will be unaffected by this.

Renewable fuels, including renewable synthetic fuels, are incentivised through the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation and are an important measure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as we transition to zero emission vehicles.

Vehicles fuelled by renewable synthetic equivalents of petrol and diesel have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but are unlikely to offer the air quality benefits of battery electric or hydrogen fuelled vehicles.

■ **Peckham Rye Station: Lifts**

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[18436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's timescale is for completion of the Access for All programme lift installation at Peckham Rye Station.

Grant Shapps:

We will be able to confirm the completion date once detailed designs are complete, and construction scheduled to ensure minimal disruption to passengers.

■ **Ports: Finance**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[2016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications have been received; which organisations made those applications; to the Ports Infrastructure and Connectivity and Resilience Fund; and how much has been paid from that Fund to date.

Kelly Tolhurst:

My Department received 28 Ports Infrastructure and Connectivity and Resilience Fund applications. They were from Bristol, Dover, Falmouth, Felixstowe, Harwich, Heysham, Hull, Immingham, Ipswich, Kings Lynn, Lancaster, Liverpool, London Gateway, Newhaven, Pembroke Dock, Plymouth, Poole, Port of London, Portland, Portsmouth, Sheerness, Shoreham, Southampton, Teesport, Thames Oilport, Thamesport, Tilbury, and Tyne.

So far a total of £265,458.50 in grants has been paid to the successful applicants who have completed their projects and provided fully verified expenditure documentation for these projects. We expect that this amount will increase rapidly over the next month or so as my Department receives, and is able to verify, the relevant documentation from the remaining successful applicants.

■ **Public Transport: Leicester**

Claudia Webbe: [\[2011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve public transport in Leicester.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Leicester is one of 12 city regions with the opportunity to bid for a share of £1.22 billion from the Transforming Cities Fund. The Fund is designed to improve public and sustainable transport links.

The bus market outside London is deregulated and decisions regarding service provision is primarily a commercial matter for bus operators. Decisions on subsidised bus services are a matter for individual English local authorities, in the light of their other spending priorities.

The Bus Services Act 2017 introduced new powers for local authorities and operators to work together to grow bus passenger numbers.

The £220 million Better Deal for Bus Users package provides new funding to transform bus services and includes a National Bus Strategy, which together will detail measures to improve bus services. This includes an extra £30 million for local authorities in 2020/21. If Leicester City Council complete statements of intent demonstrating how they will meet the funding requirements, it will be provided with the additional allocation of £83,550. This is on top of the £100,287 received in 2018/19 from the annual Bus Service Operators Grant.

There is £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links outside London. This investment will boost bus services by including: higher frequency services, new priority schemes will make routes more efficient, more affordable simpler fares and at least 4,000 new Zero Emission Buses.

For rail, the new operator of East Midlands Railway, Abellio, is bringing a package of more than £600 million investment in improvements to rail services across their area. This will include an investment of £20 million on stations, including a larger scheme at Leicester, and replacement of the entire train fleet with more than 340 carriages.

■ Railway Signals: Procurement**Stephen Hammond:**[\[18540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had with the Office of Rail and Road on the market study into the supply of signalling systems.

Grant Shapps:

The Office of Rail and Road has made the Department aware of the market study, but there have been no substantive discussions with DfT Ministers or officials.

■ Railways: Veterans**Rosie Duffield:**[\[18865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the railcard for veterans will be valid for use on (a) peak and (b) off-peak services.

Grant Shapps:

On 22 January, we announced that our new Veterans Railcard would be available from 11 November this year. Passengers will be fully appraised of the railcard's validity before it goes live, and this will include how to apply and the detailed terms and conditions.

Rolling Stock**Stephen Hammond:**[\[18541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the length of leases of rolling stock operating on the rail network; and what the end dates are of those rolling stock leases.

Grant Shapps:

The length of rolling stock leases is a commercial matter for the train operating companies to negotiate with rolling stock owners to meet their particular business needs. The Department makes available public register versions of franchise agreements, which set out the lease periods in the relevant schedules. They can be seen at www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-register-of-rail-passenger-franchise-agreements.

Shipping: Equality**Karl Turner:**[\[18702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 5 April 2019 to Question 239228 on Shipping: Equality, what the Reducing Regulation Committee's decision was on the Post Implementation Review of the Equality Act 2010 (Work on Ships and Hovercraft) Regulations 2011; and when he plans to publish that Post Implementation Review.

Kelly Tolhurst:

My Department has been awaiting the legal outcome of the employment tribunal – Walker v Wallem Shipmanagement, in which a female seafarer was discriminated against during the recruitment process because of her sex. This case pertained to the Equality Act 2010 (Work on Ships and Hovercraft) Regulations 2011. The tribunal's judgement raises concerns about loopholes in the Regulations designed to protect seafarers. Addressing any potential issue would require a legislative amendment and will need to be addressed separately, while we continue with the publication of the Post Implementation Review.

Shipping: Exhaust Emissions**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[18433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on climate change of (a) particulate matter affecting air quality and (b) greenhouse gasses created by ships whilst in port.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Assessment of the climate change and air quality impacts arising from shipping emissions are undertaken on both a national and international basis.

Nationally the UK's National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory incorporates an assessment of emissions from ships, including those in port. The inventory includes both particulate matter and greenhouse gases. Additionally the Department published targeted research on shipping emissions in July 2019.

Internationally the UK provides fuel sales and consumption data to both the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Maritime Organization, which informs international assessments of greenhouse gas emissions from shipping. The UK has also provided financial support to the IMO to progress this work.

■ Taxis: Licensing**Conor McGinn:**[\[18840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help local authorities take effective enforcement action against taxis and private hire vehicles licensed in different boroughs.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We are aware of a number of authorities that use their existing powers to require the drivers they licence to cooperate with requests from authorised compliance and enforcement officers in other areas.

Authorities are able to co-authorise compliance and enforcement officers, extending their powers to take action against all licensees licensed by authorities in the agreement.

Conor McGinn:[\[18841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's timescale is for responding to the Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing: protecting users consultation published on 12 February 2019.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We will shortly be issuing Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards to licensing authorities on protecting passengers.

■ Travel: Concessions**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[18944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the role of (a) easitNETWORK and (b) other discount travel schemes in achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Grant Shapps:

We have made no specific assessment of the role of easitNETWORK in achieving new zero emissions by 2050. We are committed to improving the attractiveness of rail, having recently introduced the 16-17 Saver and 26-30 railcards, with a commitment to introducing a new railcard for veterans later this year.

Unmanned Air Vehicles**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[1176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the trends in the level of misuse of civilian drones; and whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals on civilian drone use.

Kelly Tolhurst:

In its Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Strategy, the Government has set out its ongoing commitment to building a comprehensive, up-to date risk picture, as well as horizon scanning to predict the future threat. The Government also introduced the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill in the House of Lords on 9th January, which will provide the police with greater powers to tackle drone misuse.

TREASURY**Beer: Excise Duties****Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**[\[18850\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Society of Independent Brewers on continuation of the existing scheme for small breweries' relief.

Jesse Norman:

The Treasury is reviewing Small Brewers Relief (SBR). As part of this review, Ministers and Treasury officials have met regularly with the Society of Independent Brewers.

Details of ministerial meetings can be found on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

Financial Services: EU Action**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[1846\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to bring forward proposals to match the EU action plan on sustainable finance.

John Glen:

The UK shares the aims of the EU's Sustainable Finance Action Plan. The three new pieces of legislation that followed the EU's Sustainable Finance Action Plan, were all supported by the UK.

The UK's Green Finance Strategy set out our ambition to align private sector financial flows with clean, environmentally sustainable and resilient growth. Further, hosting COP26 in November will provide a unique opportunity to pursue our green finance goals in partnership with many countries around the world, including the EU.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Grahame Morris:

[\[18401\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to (a) plan for and (b) manage the decline in fuel duty revenues as the UK increases the use of electric vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

Fuel duty will continue to play an important role in the tax system in the short and medium term. Last year the Government raised about £700 billion across all taxes, levies and duties; of which £28 billion was raised from fuel duty.

Technology is changing many aspects of the economy, including vehicles, and the Government is considering how the tax system will need to adapt to manage those changes.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[1251\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12225 on Mental Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements, what discussions officials of his Department has had with officials of the Treasury on the importance of people with health conditions getting travel insurance with adequate cover after European Health Insurance Card arrangements cease; and what negotiations the UK Government plans to conduct with the European Commission on safeguarding UK travellers with health conditions.

John Glen:

Regardless of any future healthcare arrangements, people who have moved to the UK / EU before 31 December 2020, will continue to have life-long reciprocal healthcare rights provided they remain covered under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

For individuals who are not, or who cease to be, covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, we will consider addressing future social security coordination arrangements, which includes reciprocal healthcare cover, with the EU.

The Government advises that UK citizens check that any policy they buy provides comprehensive cover for their medical conditions when going overseas, both to EU and non-EU destinations. This remains our advice.

■ **Mental Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements**

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[1249\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12225 on Mental Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements, what enforcement action will be taken to ensure that companies comply with the Financial Conduct Authority's guidance to improve access to travel insurance for all consumers with medical conditions; and in the event that companies do not comply with that guidance, what consequences will apply.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[1250\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12225 on Mental Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements, how people with mental health conditions seeking travel insurance will be made aware of the risk that they might be declined cover; and what rights those people will have to challenge such a decision.

John Glen:

New rules and guidance published by the FCA on Wednesday 5th February require firms to signpost consumers with mental health conditions to specialist providers when they are declined travel insurance cover on account of their condition.

Insurers must treat customers fairly and firms are required to do so under the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) rules. Furthermore, the FCA also states that an insurer's communications should be clear, fair and not misleading.

If consumers believe they have been treated unfairly by their insurer, or if they believe that their insurer has not communicated with them in a clear manner, they should first make a formal complaint to the insurer, before referring the matter to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

It is for regulators to determine the powers they use to address problems in the markets they regulate. They are authorised to impose fines, order injunctions, bring criminal prosecution and issue public censure when disciplinary action against a firm or individual is taken. The FCA sets out their enforcement powers on their website.

■ **Mortgages: Government Assistance**

Stephanie Peacock: [\[19004\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps his Department has taken to provide support to mortgage prisoners.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[19005\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with representatives from the (a) Financial Conduct Authority and (b) UK Finance on mortgage prisoners.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with many organisations in the public and private sectors on a variety of issues. The Treasury is discussing the issue of mortgage prisoners with consumer groups, mortgage lenders, the Financial Conduct Authority and UK Finance.

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

Lenders are currently making the necessary adjustments and system changes to enable them to use the modified affordability assessment for borrowers looking to re-mortgage. We expect lenders to start offering these borrowers products using the new rules in Q2 2020.

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

■ **VAT****Stephen McPartland:**[\[18779\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a short term reduction in VAT on the economy.

Jesse Norman:

VAT is an important source of revenue for the Exchequer, raising approximately £132 billion in 2018/2019. This plays an important part in funding the Government's spending priorities including hospitals, schools, and defence.

Reducing the standard rate would come at a considerable cost to the Exchequer, and that cost would have to be balanced by increased taxes elsewhere, or reductions in government spending. Therefore, while all taxes are kept under review, there are currently no plans to reduce the standard rate of VAT.

WALES■ **Railways: Veterans****James Sunderland:**[\[900910\]](#)

What discussions he has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Transport and (b) Welsh Government on the roll-out of the railcard for veterans in Wales.

David T C Davies:

We are working closely together on the veterans railcard. My officials continue to work with both the Department for Transport and Welsh Government to ensure that the Veterans' Railcard is accepted on services for which they are responsible.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ EnAble Fund for Elected Office: Applications****Marion Fellows:**[\[18851\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 13485 on EnAble Fund for Elected Office, how many applications to the EnAble Fund were made by candidates standing in (a) the 2019 UK General Election, and (b) a Westminster by-election since the launch of that fund.

Elizabeth Truss:

The interim EnAble Fund for Elected Office was set up to cover scheduled elections between December 2018 and March 2020, meaning that funding was not allocated to cover the 2019 General Election. We are exploring options to provide retrospective payments to eligible General Election candidates.

Candidates seeking support for a Parliamentary by-election are considered on a case-by-case basis. We have not received any applications for any Westminster by-elections since the launch of the fund.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Maintenance****Nick Fletcher:**[\[19064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support parents that have (a) ongoing claims and (b) been waiting for payment of arrears for up to 10 years through the Child Maintenance Service (CMS); whether she plans to reduce the amount of time before the CMS seeks a court order for enforcement of payment of arrears; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing greater penalties for parents that avoid making payments in cases where there are substantial arrears.

Mims Davies:

Where paying parents fail to pay their maintenance on time and in full, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) aim to take immediate action to recover the debt and re-establish compliance using its range of enforcement powers.

If all efforts to re-establish compliance have been exhausted and the paying parent is employed, the Service can deduct their maintenance and any arrears directly from their earnings. The CMS can also deduct directly from bank accounts as a lump sum or regular amount. We have a range of other strong enforcement powers, including

the use of Enforcement Agents to take control of goods, forcing the sale of property, disqualification from holding a UK passport or commitment to prison.

The CMS is committed to using its wide ranging enforcement powers proportionally, and in the best interests of children and separated families, and must consider on a case by case basis whether taking action will secure more money for children.

Since 2018 we have introduced new collection and enforcement powers. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the new powers. At present we have no plans to further extend these powers.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Stella Creasy:

[\[18708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is available during the three month wait for eligibility for limited capability for work and work-related activity for a person who was eligible for employment and support allowance but who was in a couple and not the main claimant, in the event of their separation.

Justin Tomlinson:

Where a person makes a new claim for New Style Employment and Support Allowance (NS ESA) and satisfies the contribution conditions, they receive a basic rate of benefit at £73.10 a week (for a single person over 25) during the 13-week assessment phase while capability for work is established.

Where Universal Credit (UC) is claimed on health grounds, there is a 3-month relevant period which mirrors the 13-week assessment phase in ESA. Entitlement to UC is calculated on various factors including housing, childcare and the child element; however, the standard allowance per assessment period is £317.82 (for a single person over 25).

Martyn Day:

[\[18845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of extending the eligibility criteria for new style Employment Support Allowance to include contributions to national insurance paid in the last three years that do not fall within the relevant income tax years.

Justin Tomlinson:

There are no plans to extend the qualifying period for new style Employment and Support Allowance to include National Insurance contributions paid in the last three years that do not fall within the relevant income tax years.

The Government considers the current qualifying period looking at an individual's contribution record over the last two complete tax years to be a fair way of assessing entitlement.

■ Independent Serious Case Panel

Lilian Greenwood:

[18385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September to Question 12927 on the Independent Serious Case Panel, what qualifications the independent members have for membership of the panel.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are absolutely committed to improving our services, especially to the most vulnerable, which is why we have set up the Serious Case Panel. The panel was developed to take themes and systemic issues that come out of various case reviews and make recommendations for improvements.

More information about the Serious Case Panel will be published in due course.

■ Maternity Allowance

Steve McCabe:

[18497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2020 to Question 10295, on Maternity Allowance, on what date the service level agreement came into force; which parties are bound by that agreement; and whether she plans to revert to clearing claims for maternity allowance within 24 working days.

Mims Davies:

There is no formal Service Level Agreement in place; that term was used to describe the process by which the department considers a variety of factors to identify the most appropriate balance of resources to deliver a good level of customer service. Currently we work to a planning assumption of a maximum waiting time of 24 days, but our actual processing time is currently eight days.

■ Pension Credit

Stephen Kinnock:

[18798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much pension credit was unclaimed in (a) Aberavon constituency, (b) Wales and (c) the UK in each of the last three years.

Guy Opperman:

Official statistics on the take-up of income-related benefits at Great Britain level, including Pension Credit, can be found in the 'Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up in 2016 to 2017' publication.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2016-to-2017>

The next report containing 2017/18 data is due to be published on 27th February 2020. It will be available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2017-to-2018>

The information requested on the amount of Pension Credit which remains unclaimed is only available at the Great Britain level. Below are the figures on the amount of unclaimed Pension Credit within Great Britain over the past 3 years of data available.

YEAR	ESTIMATED AMOUNT UNCLAIMED (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	RANGE (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)
2016/17	3,050	2,620 – 3,520
2015/16	2,720	2,330 – 3,140
2014/15	2,760	2,400 – 3,140

■ Pensioners: Poverty

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[18799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pensioners lived in (a) poverty and (b) extreme poverty in (i) Wales and (ii) Aberavon constituency in each of the last 10 years.

Guy Opperman:

The tables below provide estimates of the number of pensioners in Wales living in households where equivalised income is a) below 60% of median income and b) below 50% of median income. Information is only available for regions on an average of three financial years as the sample sizes in the survey used to collect income data are not large enough to provide robust single year estimates.

Estimates for constituencies are not possible due to sample sizes so it is not possible to provide estimates for Aberavon.

Relative low income sets a threshold as a proportion of the UK average (median) income and moves as average income changes over time. Absolute low income takes the 60% of median income threshold from 2010/11 and moves this in line with inflation. This is designed to assess how low incomes are faring with reference to inflation.

NUMBER (MILLIONS) OF PENSIONERS LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH EQUIVALISED INCOME BELOW 60% OF MEDIAN INCOME IN WALES

3 year average	Relative Low Income (Before Housing Costs)	Relative Low Income (After Housing Costs)	Absolute Low Income (Before Housing Costs)	Absolute Low Income (After Housing Costs)
2015/16 to 2017/18	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2014/15 to 2016/17	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2013/14 to 2015/16	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2012/13 to 2014/15	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2011/12 to 2013/14	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2010/11 to 2012/13	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2009/10 to 2011/12	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2008/09 to 2010/11	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2007/08 to 2009/10	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2006/07 to 2008/09	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

NUMBER (MILLIONS) OF PENSIONERS LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH EQUIVALISED INCOME BELOW 50% OF MEDIAN INCOME IN WALES

3 year average	Relative Low Income (Before Housing Costs)	Relative Low Income (After Housing Costs)	Absolute Low Income (Before Housing Costs)	Absolute Low Income (After Housing Costs)
2015/16 to 2017/18	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2014/15 to 2016/17	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2013/14 to 2015/16	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2012/13 to 2014/15	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2011/12 to 2013/14	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
2010/11 to 2012/13	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2009/10 to 2011/12	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
2008/09 to 2010/11	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2007/08 to 2009/10	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
2006/07 to 2008/09	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Numbers are rounded to the nearest 0.1 million children

■ Universal Credit

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[18802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants who have received an advanced payment have subsequently reported financial difficulty to their work coach in each of the last three years.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Universal Credit: Aberavon

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[18806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much has been paid in back-dated payments to universal credit claimants in Aberavon constituency in each of the last three years.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The Department does not centrally collate records of back-dated payments by constituencies.

■ Universal Credit: Wales

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[18801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claimants in (a) Aberavon constituency and (b) Wales have received an advanced payment.

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.

New Claim Advances are available to support those in immediate financial need until their first Universal Credit payment is made. Around 60 per cent of new claims take an advance payment. Subject to some fluctuation, this rate of advance take-up has been broadly consistent over the last 12 months. 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.

The below table shows the number of claims paid and those who received at least one advance payment in Wales and the Aberavon parliamentary constituency.

	NUMBER OF PAID CLAIMS	OF WHICH; HAVE HAD AT LEAST ONE ADVANCE	PROPORTION OF CLAIMS PAID AN ADVANCE
Wales	181,120	100,050	55%
Aberavon parliamentary constituency	6,470	3,530	55%

NOTES

1. Figures relate only to Universal Credit full service, from inception to November 2019 inclusive
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10
3. Figures include all types of advances, including advances paid after the first assessment period

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Introducing a Police Covenant for England and Wales

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS127\]](#)

Our outstanding police deserve the upmost respect, support and recognition. Brave officers put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe, demonstrating remarkable courage, sacrifice and public duty.

They face extraordinary pressure as they protect the people they tirelessly serve from terrorists, serious violence and exploitation. Their families too often fear for their safety or are left to pick up the pieces when something goes wrong.

From day one, this Government has put our world-class police first and prioritised their wellbeing. That's why we have committed to introducing a Police Covenant in England and Wales to recognise the exceptional job our frontline officers do in unique and challenging circumstances.

We are determined to give our officers the enhanced support they need, so I have accelerated work on this pledge to protect both them and their loved ones. Our commitment to ensuring our police have the recognition they deserve is absolute, so this Covenant will be enshrined in law. This will leave no room for doubt, creating a statutory duty to do more to support our police.

Police officers and staff are uniquely placed to tell me what they need, so I am today launching a public consultation on what the Police Covenant should look like. This sets out our proposals to help the police in three key areas, to improve their wellbeing, increase their physical protection, and support their families.

We are asking for thoughts on our plans for the principle and scope of the Police Covenant and for any new ideas to be considered as it is developed.

The consultation will be available on GOV.UK ([here](#)) and will be open for eight weeks. A copy of the consultation will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. I would urge anyone connected with policing, or who has ideas on how to protect our brave officers, to respond.

Our outstanding police officers embody public service and do not hesitate to run towards danger to keep us safe. Nothing is more important than ensuring they have the support, protection and recognition that they need to do their extraordinary job. This consultation will explore how the Covenant can best deliver that.

I thank Members for their continued engagement on this important issue.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy****Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**[\[HCWS126\]](#)

Today the Government is setting out its approach to the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

The Government has set in train the biggest review of our foreign, defence, security and development policy since the end of the Cold War. We need to grasp the opportunities of the next decade and deliver upon the Government's priorities. This is a defining moment in how the UK relates to the rest of the world and we want to take this unique opportunity to reassess our priorities and our approach to delivering them.

The Integrated Review will

i) Define the Government's ambition for the UK's role in the world and the long-term strategic aims for our national security and foreign policy.

ii) Set out the way in which the UK will be a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation, examining how we work more effectively with our allies.

iii) Determine the capabilities we need for the next decade and beyond to pursue our objectives and address the risks and threats we face.

iv) Identify the necessary reforms to Government systems and structures to achieve these goals.

v) Outline a clear approach to implementation over the next decade and set out how we will evaluate delivery of our aims.

The Review will be underpinned by the commitments the Government has already made to continue to exceed the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on Defence, to commit 0.7% of GNI to international development and to maintain the nuclear deterrent.

A cross-Whitehall team in the Cabinet Secretariat, and a small taskforce in No10, will report to me and the National Security Council. The review will be closely aligned with this year's Comprehensive Spending Review but will also look beyond it. The Government will consult with experts beyond Whitehall – in the UK and among our allies – in order to ensure the best possible outcome and to build a strong platform for the decade ahead. We will keep Parliament fully informed during the process as we deliver a review that is in the best interests of the British people across the United Kingdom.