

**Daily Report****Monday, 2 March 2020**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:57 P.M., 02 March 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Sentencing: Appeals

Philip Davies:

[\[18559\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if she will extend the current 28 day limit for appealing a sentence under the unduly lenient sentence scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

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

There are no plans to extend the 28 day deadline. The current deadline provides an appropriate balance between the rights of victims and offenders, ensuring that offenders are not left uncertain of whether their sentence may be extended for a long period of time, whilst allowing victims sufficient time to request a review of the sentence under the scheme.

Philip Davies:

[\[18563\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many of the cases referred to her Department under the unduly lenient sentence scheme were received on the 28th day after sentence outside office hours; and what proportion of those cases were (a) accepted and (b) refused in each of the last five years for which information is available.

Michael Ellis:

2015 – of the 14 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

2016 – of the 28 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

2017 - of the 27 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

2018 - of the 31 sentences that were received out of time 2 were received on the 28th day and too late for them to be actioned.

2019 - of the 43 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

Whilst referrals for sentences are received and actioned on the 28th day, those are cases that are received early enough on the day to be actioned. An unduly lenient sentence case can only be taken forward if either myself or the Attorney General has approved action (on the basis of a complete prosecution file and proper legal advice)

and an application has been filed with the Court of Appeal before the expiry of the statutory 28 day deadline. None of the above cases were accepted as being within time by my office as they were received too late to be actioned and consequently they were all marked as out of time.

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

Philip Davies:

[18564]

To ask the Attorney General, how many of the cases referred to her Department under the unduly lenient sentence scheme were received before the 28th day after sentence time period had elapsed but outside office hours and where his office did not re-open until after that 28 day deadline had passed; and what proportion of those cases were (a) accepted and (b) refused in each of the last five years for which information is available.

Michael Ellis:

2015 – of the 14 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

2016 – of the 28 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

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2019 - of the 43 sentences that were received out of time only 1 was received on the 28th day and too late for it to be actioned.

Whilst referrals for sentences are received and actioned on the 28th day, those are cases that are received early enough on the day to be actioned. An unduly lenient sentence case can only be taken forward if either myself or the Attorney General has approved action (on the basis of a complete prosecution file and proper legal advice) and an application has been filed with the Court of Appeal before the expiry of the statutory 28 day deadline. None of the above cases were accepted as being within time by my office as they were received too late to be actioned and consequently they were all marked as out of time.

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

■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[18925\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many and what proportion of people that were due to be prosecuted for benefit fraud have had their prosecution proceedings terminated in the latest period for which figures are available; and for what reasons were those proceedings terminated.

Michael Ellis:

Allegations of benefit fraud are investigated by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Local Authority investigators. DWP and Local Authority investigators have discretion to apply an administrative penalty or refer to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) or Local Authority prosecutors for a decision on whether to prosecute.

The records held by the CPS identify the number of offences in which a prosecution commenced and reached a first hearing in magistrates' courts, rather than the number of people prosecuted. A single defendant may be prosecuted for multiple offences.

No central records of the prosecution outcomes of offences are held by the CPS. To obtain details of the number of people prosecuted and whose proceedings were stopped by the CPS, for offences of benefit fraud would require a manual exercise of reviewing individual case files to be undertaken at a disproportionate cost.

Furthermore, cases of benefit fraud are also prosecuted by Local Authorities so any data the CPS can glean from a manual exercise would not provide a complete record.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Boilers: Hydrogen

Matt Western:

[\[21281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the economic viability of the use of hydrogen-ready boilers in domestic heating.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Burning natural gas for heating accounts for a significant proportion of household carbon emissions. There is currently no clear consensus on the best approach to decarbonising heat at scale, and our December 2018 report on Clean Growth: Transforming Heating set out that using hydrogen as a replacement for natural gas, including for domestic heating, may play an important role.

BEIS is currently investing over £100m in hydrogen innovation. This includes Hy4Heat, a programme which aims to assess the safety and technical feasibility of hydrogen for heating in homes. This includes working with industry to develop

prototype hydrogen appliances including hydrogen ready boilers and will evaluate their likely costs and performance upon completion of the programme in March 2021.

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect on UK businesses of COVID-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is closely monitoring developments of COVID-19 in relation to potential economic impacts on UK businesses, supply chains, and the wider economy.

■ **Business: South West**

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[20381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 14949, how many of the 33,860 scaleups identified are in (a) Dorset and (b) the South West of England.

Paul Scully:

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

According to ONS data (Business demography – High Growth Enterprises 2018), the number of scaleups in (a) Dorset is 190 and (b) South West of England is 2,745.

■ **Carbon Emissions**

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[18432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of effect of the fifth carbon budget on progress towards net zero emissions.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Our existing carbon budgets are amongst the most ambitious targets in the world. We have met our first two carbon budgets and our latest emissions projections show that we are on track to meet the third. However, we recognise the need for further action to meet the fourth and fifth carbon budgets.

2020 will be a Year of Climate Action, and we will bring forward ambitious new plans throughout the year to reduce emissions across key sectors of the economy – including an Energy White Paper and Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

The Committee on Climate Change will advise on the level of the sixth carbon budget in September this year.

■ Climate Change

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[18431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to consult the Committee on Climate Change on the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement 2015.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK's NDC will be based on robust analysis undertaken for domestic climate change mitigation policy which, in line with the requirements of the Climate Change Act, is informed by advice from the independent Committee on Climate Change.

■ Climate Change Convention

Deidre Brock: [\[20511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to improve the UK's ambitions for the UNFCCC COP26.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

COP26 is the most important Climate Conference since Paris in 2015 and delivering success at COP26 is a top priority for the Government. We are determined to use the COP26 Conference in November to demonstrate that the zero carbon economy is the growth story of the future. We must show that this transition is irreversible and accelerating; and that it will be fair and inclusive.

■ Companies: Registration

Alison Thewliss: [\[20573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people have been prosecuted for filing false information to Companies House in each of the last three years.

Paul Scully:

The knowing or reckless filing of false information at Companies House is a criminal offence under section 1112 of the Companies Act 2006. According to its internal case management system, the Insolvency Service – which has lead responsibility for bringing prosecutions for this offence in England and Wales - has prosecuted five separate individuals under section 1112 of the Companies Act 2006 in the last three years.

The Enforcement Team at Companies House is unaware of any such prosecutions having been brought in Scotland or Northern Ireland during this period.

■ Consumers: Protection

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[20380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February to Question 14947, when the consultation with the Consumer

Protection Partnership will begin; and if he will publish the (a) outcome of and (b) Government response to that consultation.

Paul Scully:

The Consumer Protection Partnership (CPP) meets regularly to review evidence and prioritise enforcement action. The Department has raised park homes with the CPP intelligence gathering group, and the CPP will discuss the issue at a meeting on 23 April. The CPP and the agencies that are members of the group will then decide on next steps.

■ **Copyright: EU Law**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[18606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2020 to Question 6620 on Copyright: EU Law, whether the Government plans to make changes to the UK copyright framework as part of the usual domestic policy process.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government takes decisions on whether or not to legislate after consideration of the evidence. In areas where the evidence demonstrates that the current copyright framework is not effective, the Government may propose changes to it. Any future changes to the copyright framework would be subject to a full public consultation and impact assessment.

■ **Dementia: Research**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[15013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's priorities are for dementia research.

Amanda Solloway:

Improving the lives of people living with dementia, including their families and carers, is a top priority for the Government. We remain strongly committed to advancing research into dementia and will be setting out our new plans for supporting people with dementia in England for 2020-2025 later this year.

Under the current Challenge on Dementia 2020 strategy, the Government's commitment to spend over £300 million on dementia research between 2015 and 2020 was met a year early, with £341 million being spent by March 2019 via the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Through the £2.5 billion Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), Government is also supporting the £79 million Accelerating Detection of Disease challenge, a project bringing together the NHS, industry and leading charities to support research into the early diagnosis of disease, including dementia.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Aviation**Layla Moran:** [19057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many air miles were accumulated by (a) Ministers, (b) special advisers and (c) civil servants in his Department in (i) the last six months and (ii) each calendar year since 2015.

Nadhim Zahawi:

All air flights for the Department must be booked through the Crown Commercial travel management system and do not provide personal rewards. The Departmental expenses policy, which applies to special advisers as well as civil servants, sets out that air miles and similar benefits earned through official travel should not be used for private purposes.

Similar arrangements for Ministers are set out in the Ministerial Code; if it is impractical to use benefits for Government travel, Ministers may donate air miles to charity if permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is chosen by the airline.

Information on accumulated air miles is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Huawei**Chi Onwurah:** [18813]

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

Nadhim Zahawi:

Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>

The latest published data covers July to September 2019. Data for October to December 2019 will be published shortly.

■ Electric Vehicles: Batteries**Liz Saville Roberts:** [20598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to facilitate the development of domestic manufacturing capacity for electric vehicle batteries.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has a long-standing programme of support to maintain the competitiveness of the UK automotive sector. Through the Automotive Sector Deal, we are working with the industry to develop world-leading battery technologies.

We have already invested £274 million in the Faraday Battery Challenge (FBC) through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. Faraday is a cutting-edge programme, helping UK businesses to lead the world in the design, development, and manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles. Under the FBC, we have invested £120 million in the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC) which will open in 2020 and provide a state-of-the-art pilot facility to test new cell technology. UKBIC will play a key role in laying the groundwork to secure a battery Gigafactory in the UK.

In October 2019, the Government announced up to £1 billion of additional funding to develop UK supply chains for the large-scale production of, and research and development for, electric vehicles.

■ Electric Vehicles: Tax Allowances

Julian Knight:

[\[18790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with officials in HM Treasury on tax reliefs for electric vehicles.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Officials in the Department have regular discussions with HM Treasury officials on a range of subjects, including incentivising the uptake of ultra low emission vehicles and associated infrastructure.

The Government is supporting the early market for electric vehicles with demand incentives. Government grants for plug in vehicles continue to be available to help reduce the up-front purchase price of electric vehicles. Drivers of ultra-low emission vehicles also receive other benefits, including lower tax rates, and grants towards the installation of chargepoints. For instance, to accelerate the shift to zero emission cars, all zero emission models will pay no company car tax in 2020-21, 1% in 2021-22 before returning to the planned 2% rate in 2022-23 – a significant tax saving for employees and employers. A number of local authorities also provide additional incentives such as free parking or exemption from the congestion charge. We stated in our Road to Zero strategy that consumer incentives in some form will continue to play a role beyond 2020.

■ Energy: Meters

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the number of people unable to top up as a result of £5 minimum top up limits on pre-payment meters in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) the UK.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department does not hold the requested data.

While it was a commercial decision by British Gas to increase the minimum pre-payment meter top up from £1 to £5, I welcome the recent announcement that this has been reversed.

There are a range of pre-payment tariff and top up options available from other suppliers and customers should switch to one that best suits their needs. Customers who do not switch are protected by the Government's price cap on default tariffs and the pre-payment meter price cap.

■ EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[18435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his policy is on maintaining UK participation in EU Emissions Trading Scheme mechanisms after the transition period.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK has long been a leader in carbon pricing policy – introducing the world's first multi-industry carbon trading system in 2002. Carbon pricing is a crucial tool in decarbonising energy and carbon intensive industries, as well as supporting our net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 commitment.

Whatever our future relationship with the EU, we will seek to ensure that our future approach is at least as ambitious as the existing scheme and provide a smooth transition for the relevant sectors.

■ Fireworks: Sales

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[18868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2020 to Question 13075, on Fireworks: Sales, when the Office for Product Safety and Standards plans to publish its evidence base; what evidence that organisation plans to gather in Scotland; and from whom in Scotland that organisation plans to gather evidence.

Paul Scully:

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) work on the fireworks evidence base is ongoing and will be published in due course.

OPSS is engaging with officials in the Scottish Government about their consultation and Fireworks Action Plan for Scotland. Any evidence that has emerged from that consultation will be considered as part of the wider fireworks evidence base.

OPSS invited evidence from a range of stakeholders across the UK including those in Scotland such as the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

■ Floods: Spoil Heaps

Ian Lavery:

[\[18719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the risk of floodwater to coal slag heaps in ex-mining communities in England.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of its statutory responsibilities the Coal Authority, one of the Department's Partner Organisations, has regular contact with Local Authorities in former coal field areas on a range of issues relating to liabilities arising from former coal workings. Following the recent floods, the Coal Authority will be writing to all Local Authorities to remind them of their responsibilities in relation to the management and oversight of coal tips, offering support and advice where required.

■ Fossil Fuels

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[20402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to ensure that the forthcoming oil and gas sector deal has the potential to provide benefits for energy sector companies across the UK.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We know that the offshore oil and gas sector has a key role to play as we move to a Net Zero economy. We have committed to supporting this transition with a transformational Sector Deal. The oil and gas sector, including its supply chain, has a UK-wide footprint and as such we envisage that any Sector Deal should benefit companies across the whole of the UK. This will ensure they benefit from the opportunities of a Net Zero economy thereby anchoring them to the UK and retaining the high skilled jobs in the sector.

■ Fuels: Prices

Ben Lake:

[\[20549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on rural communities of changes in fuel prices.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government believes that it is essential that consumers get a fair deal and that a competitive market is the best way to keep prices low. At a national level most movements of average pump price are driven by global prices for oil and exchange rates.

The Rural Fuel Duty Relief scheme administered by HMRC provides support for rural motorists by compensating fuel retailers in specific rural areas with high road fuel prices. These areas were chosen because, before the scheme was introduced, pump prices in those areas were significantly higher than the UK average. Further information on this scheme is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/excise-notice-2001-rural-fuel-duty-relief-scheme/excise-notice-2001-rural-fuel-duty-relief-scheme>.

■ Global Wind Organisation

Alex Cunningham:

[18693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when officials in his Department last met representatives of the Global Wind Organisation; and how often those meetings take place.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Officials in the Department have not met with representatives of the Global Wind Organisation.

In the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, published on 7 March 2019, the sector made a commitment to continue to collaborate in order to deliver a strong, sustainable and continually improving culture, promoting and maintaining the highest possible standards of health and safety through the life cycle of projects both in the UK and around the world.

■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen

Liz Saville Roberts:

[20599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to develop hydrogen-vehicle refuelling infrastructure.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is committed to exploring the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, which has potential to support the UK's efforts to decarbonise transport and meet the 2050 Net Zero target. The UK is well placed to be a leader in hydrogen and fuel-cell powered transportation due to our high-quality engineering and manufacturing capability and we are investing in innovation within the hydrogen supply chain from production to end use.

The Government's £23 million Hydrogen for Transport programme aims to increase the uptake of fuel-cell electric vehicles (FCEV) and grow the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations. We are delivering nine new refuelling stations, upgrading five existing stations, and deploying hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles. Alongside this, the £2 million FCEV Fleet Support Scheme is supporting public and private sector fleets to become early adopters of hydrogen fuel-cell cars and vans.

■ New Businesses

Richard Fuller:

[18513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of business start-ups in (a) North East Bedfordshire constituency, (b) Bedfordshire and (c) the UK in each year since 2010.

Paul Scully:

The table below provides ONS data on new business registrations for VAT and/or PAYE (ONS Business Demography 2018 – Enterprise births, deaths and survivals).

Notes:

1) Timeseries data for business births is not available at Parliamentary Constituency level but we can provide figures as below for the three districts which make up Bedfordshire.

2) Data is not available for periods earlier than 2013 or later than 2018.

YEAR	UK	BEDFORDSHIRE (COUNTY)	BEDFORD (DISTRICT)	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE (DISTRICT)	LUTON (DISTRICT)
2013	346275	3450	875	1540	1035
2014	350305	3560	870	1550	1140
2015	382755	3990	980	1585	1425
2016	413900	10370	1065	4865	4440
2017	381885	4915	925	2245	1745
2018	380580	4710	910	2200	1600

■ **Nucleus**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[15134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority in establishing Nucleus, the national nuclear archive, at Wick; what proportion of the known documentation destined for Nucleus has been shipped to the site to date; what plans there are to digitise the archive contents to facilitate remote searching and access; and what use has been made of Nucleus by outside interested parties since it was opened.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Nucleus nuclear archive building in Wick opened in February 2017. Since, an estimated 20% of the relevant records held at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA) sites have been transferred there, while transfer of off-site records is approximately 40% complete. Dounreay's records were the first to be transferred, including over 300,000 photographs and 200 tonnes of documents. Material from 16 other sites will be moved gradually over the next five years.

In the longer term, a searchable Archive Management System will provide online access to the material; security restrictions will apply to certain records. A digitisation programme to prepare a specification and scope of work began last year.

The facility has been primarily used by the local community and international nuclear community. It has hosted events for various international organisations, such as the Nuclear Energy Agency and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Most local visitors access the Caithness Archives, which is located at Wick alongside the nuclear collection.

■ Offshore Industry: Carbon Emissions

Alex Cunningham:

[\[18696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take to support offshore oil and gas workers during the transition to a low carbon economy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is currently in discussion with industry about supporting the energy transition with a transformational oil and gas Sector Deal, recognising that the offshore oil and gas sector has a key role to play as the UK moves to a net zero economy.

The UK's offshore oil and gas industry, which supports an estimated 270,000 jobs, is already very focussed on its role to support net zero by using the skills and expertise developed in the North Sea to become part of the solution to the challenges that the transition to a net zero economy will bring.

The Government supports the measures undertaken by the sector to diversify its workforce into other areas of the economy such as offshore wind. For example, OPITO, the offshore industry skills body, is working with Government and representatives from the oil and gas, renewables and nuclear sectors to identify common qualifications for a range of technical job roles to enable workers to move more freely between energy sectors. The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board has also developed a Connected Competence programme which helps equip the oil and gas workforce with transferable engineering skills that are in demand across industry sectors. This standardises competence and training requirements and makes proof of competence, training and qualifications easily transferable.

■ Offshore Industry: Employment

Alex Cunningham:

[\[18695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs on offshore (a) oil and (b) gas installations on the UK continental shelf in each year from 2016 to 2019; and what assessment he has made of trends in the level of those jobs in each year from 2020 to 2030.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Maintaining quality jobs benefitting from the skills and experience of the UK's oil and gas sector will be a key focus as the UK moves to a net zero economy. The industry is already strongly focussed on its role to support net zero by using the skills and

expertise developed in the North Sea to become part of the solution to the challenges that the transition to a net zero economy will bring.

The Department has not made an estimate of the number of jobs on offshore oil and gas installations on the UK Continental Shelf, but figures provided in the Oil and Gas UK Workforce Report 2019, suggest a recent stabilisation in the total number of offshore oil and gas workers (not broken down into oil and gas separately) at approximately 49,000. See the following weblink:

<https://oilandgasuk.co.uk/product/workforce-report/>

The Department has not made an assessment of trends in the level of those jobs in each year from 2020 to 2030, but the offshore industry skills body OPITO has published two recent reports on future trends in the level of jobs supported by the UK Continental Shelf oil and gas industry up to 2035. See the following weblinks:

<https://www.opito.com/policy-and-research/research/ukcs-workforce-dynamics-review>

<https://www.opito.com/policy-and-research/research/the-skills-landscape>

Future employment levels are subject to a wide range of factors, not least the oil price, and we are supporting the sector on several fronts, as we recognise that a successful offshore industry will continue to generate and protect jobs.

■ Pay

Philip Davies:

[18558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the increase in (a) the National Living Wage and (b) the National Minimum Wage in April 2020 on the number of (i) jobs and (ii) hours that people are employed.

Paul Scully:

Through the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW), we are ensuring the lowest paid are fairly rewarded for their contribution to the economy. This April, the NLW will increase by 6.2% to £8.72, meaning that a full-time worker on the wage will see their pay increase by over £930 over the year. Young workers on the NMW will see their pay increase between 4.6% and 6.5%. Collectively, these increases to the minimum wage are estimated to directly benefit 2.4 million workers.

In setting these rates, the Government consider the expert and independent advice of the Low Pay Commission (LPC). The LPC draws on economic, labour market and pay analysis, independent research and stakeholder evidence, to assess the impact of past minimum wage increases and their proposed rates for the following year.

To date, the LPC have found that the minimum wage has increased pay for the lowest earners without harming employment. They will publish their 2020 report later this year, which will contain a further assessment on the impact of the latest increases.

■ Post Office: Cash Dispensing**Marion Fellows:****[18852]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the reasons for a decision by Post Office Ltd not to renew a licence for an ATM in a branch.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK, which is why we committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. Any decision regarding renewal of ATM licences for a branch is an operational matter for Post Office Limited. I have asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon Member about POL's reasons for not renewing an ATM licence in a branch. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Marion Fellows:**[18853]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to Post Office Ltd to help (a) maintain and (b) increase the number of ATMs in Post Office branches.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises that widespread access to cash remains extremely important in the context of bank closures, particularly for the more vulnerable and remote customers and businesses. The Government supports the renegotiated Banking Framework agreement, which is a three-year agreement and took effect in January 2020. This agreement enables 99% of personal banking customers and 95% of business banking customers to do their day-to-day banking at the Post Office, including cash withdrawals.

In addition, LINK, the main provider of ATMs in the UK, has assured Government that they are committed to maintaining an extensive network of free-to-use cash machines, including via Post Offices, and bolstering its Financial Inclusion Programme.

Marion Fellows:**[18854]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many licences for ATMs in branches of the Post Office are due to expire in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) England in the next 12 months.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK, which is why we committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. The number of licences for ATMs in post office branches due to expire over the next 12 months in the UK is an operational matter for Post Office Limited. I have asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon Member on this matter. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Marion Fellows:[\[18855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to ensure that Post Office Ltd is able to renew the licences of all ATMs based in Post Offices which are due to expire in the next 12 months.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK, which is why we committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. The renewal of licences for ATMs in Post Offices is an operational matter for Post Office Limited. I have asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon Member about Post Office Limited's plans for renewal of ATM licences due to expire in the next 12 months. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ Post Offices: Sales**Marion Fellows:**[\[18856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what process is used to determine the price of sale of former Crown Post Office branch premises.

Marion Fellows:[\[18857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of premises that were previously a Crown Post Office branch have been sold to sub-postmasters.

Marion Fellows:

[18858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many post offices of each type have closed in each of the last three years in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) England.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK, which is why the Government committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. As such, matters relating to former Crown Post Office premises are operational matters for Post Office Limited. I have asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon Member on this matter. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ **Public Houses: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Alex Sobel:

[18976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to prevent the closure of independent pubs in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the importance of having a diverse range of pubs in local communities across the country, and the contribution pubs make to the economy and to community life in providing a place to socialise and encourage responsible drinking.

In order to provide support for pubs, the Government announced a freeze on beer duty at Budget 2018. Due to this freeze, the price of a typical pint of beer in 2020 is 2p lower than it would have been had duty increased with inflation and 14p lower than it otherwise would have been since ending the beer duty escalator in 2013.

Many pubs will benefit from the business rates retail discount announced at Budget 2018, which cuts bills for eligible businesses by one third for two years from April 2019. The Government has committed to increasing the discount to 50% in 2020/21. It is available to eligible businesses, including pubs, with a rateable value below £51,000.

■ Regulation

Philip Davies:

[\[1227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it remains Government policy for new regulations to be subject to the one-in-two-out rule.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 requires the Government to set a Business Impact Target (BIT), which monitors changes to regulation and the economic impact this has on businesses. The 'one-in-two-out' rule has supported the BIT for previous Parliaments.

The Government is currently considering what the BIT should be for this Parliament.

■ Renewable Energy: Investment

Julian Knight:

[\[18789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to encourage private investment in the renewable energy sector.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department has a number of policies to encourage private investment in the renewable energy sector.

For example, the Contracts for Difference Scheme is the main mechanism of support for new renewable electricity deployment. The scheme provides long-term price stabilisation for new projects, making projects that have high upfront costs attractive to investors, while protecting consumers when electricity prices are high. Our support through the Contracts for Difference and other legacy schemes has helped to successfully unlock £94bn^[1] of private sector investment in clean energy since 2010 and has driven down the cost of renewables. For example, offshore wind costs have fallen 65% since 2015.

In March 2019, the Government published the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, which aims to work in partnership with the industry to boost the UK supply chain, develop new technologies and increase the UK's export potential. As part of this Sector Deal, an Offshore Wind Growth Partnership was launched in June 2019, in which the private sector committed £100m towards a 10-year programme to support the growth of UK businesses looking to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the growth in offshore wind around the world.

[1] <https://about.bnef.com/clean-energy-investment/>

■ Scottish Limited Partnerships: Ownership

Alison Thewliss:

[\[20568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many fines have been levied against Scottish Limited Partnerships for failing to register a Person of Significant Control in each of the last three years.

Paul Scully:

No Scottish Limited Partnerships (SLPs) have been fined since the People with Significant Control register came into force. Compliance is Companies House's primary aim, rather than prosecution. It is taking action to ensure that all SLPs report their PSC information. Companies House is actively engaged with SLPs and their representatives to make them aware of their responsibilities. Failure to comply with the requirement to report PSC information does not incur a civil penalty but it is an offence and may lead to a fine or imprisonment upon prosecution. Companies House is not a prosecuting body and will refer cases to a relevant prosecutor when all other avenues have been exhausted and an SLP has not complied with their obligations.

Alison Thewliss:[\[20570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Scottish Limited Partnerships are qualifying under the terms of the Scottish Partnerships (Register of People with Significant Control) Regulations 2017 and the Companies and Partnerships (Accounts and Audit) Regulations 2013.

Paul Scully:

All registered Scottish Limited Partnerships (SLPs) are required to comply with the Scottish Partnerships (Register of People with Significant Control) Regulations 2017. As of 31 January 2020, there were 34,245 live¹ Scottish limited partnerships ("SLPs") on the register. Of these, Companies House considers around 10,800 of these SLPs to be active. These regulations also require a Scottish qualifying partnership (SQP) to register with Companies House and deliver information concerning its People with Significant Control (PSC). A SQP is a general partnership constituted under the law of Scotland that is a qualifying partnership under the Partnership (Accounts) Regulations 2008. As at the end of January 2020, there were 330 Scottish Qualified Partnerships bodies that declared as being eligible as SQPs.

1. Live Scottish Limited Partnerships refers to Scottish Limited Partnerships that are not dissolved/closed. Under current legislation, Scottish Limited Partnerships are unable to dissolve/close or be removed from the register. Therefore, this will include on the register a significant volume that have not carried out any activity.

Alison Thewliss:[\[20571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the value was of fines levied against Scottish Limited Partnerships for failing to register a Person of Significant Control in each of the last three years.

Paul Scully:

No such fines have been levied against Scottish Limited Partnerships. Compliance is Companies House's primary aim, rather than prosecution. It is taking action to ensure that all SLPs report their PSC information. Companies House is actively engaged with SLPs and their representatives to make them aware of their responsibilities. Failure to comply with the requirement to report PSC information does not incur a civil penalty but it is an offence and may lead to a fine or imprisonment upon prosecution. Companies House is not a prosecuting body and will refer cases to a relevant

prosecutor when all other avenues have been exhausted and an SLP has not complied with their obligations.

■ Small Businesses: Government Assistance

Robert Halfon:

[18758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to support small businesses in (a) Harlow and (b) the UK.

Paul Scully:

The Government-backed British Business Bank helps to drive economic growth by making finance markets work better for smaller businesses, enabling them to prosper and grow. The British Business Bank is currently supporting over £7.2bn of finance to over 93,000 SMEs across the UK (as at September 2019). The Bank's Online Finance Hub offers independent and impartial information on different finance options, helping smaller businesses to identify the right finance options for their needs.

The Bank's Start Up Loans programme has delivered over 69,000 loans worth over £565m since it was established in 2012. In Harlow, the programme has delivered 75 loans worth over £598,000. Each Start Up Loan comes with 12 months free mentoring and support.

Harlow has also been invited to develop proposals a Town Deal of up to £25 million. The new Town Board met for the first time in January and is developing a Town Investment Plan. The Towns Fund will address various town centre issues, including business environment.

The objective of the Towns Fund is to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth, including through ensuring towns have the space to support small business development.

Harlow Enterprise Zone (EZ) is one of 45 government-designated EZs which aim to incentivise small business start-ups and growth principally by offering business rates relief and simplified planning. Key objectives include attracting increased inward investment, and the creation of job opportunities for local residents.

Government supports a network of 38 Growth Hubs across England, which offer free expert advice to on the most suitable business finance as well as access to regional and national organisations and networks. Businesses in Harlow and across Essex are encouraged to access support and advice at South East Business Hub ^[1].

Harlow firms are also encouraged to access the BEST (Essex) Growth Hub. Although physically based in Southend, the Growth Hub's services are available to Harlow businesses.

The recently launched Government's own Business Support Website brings together on one new and easy-to-use site, information, support and advice to businesses in England. The support is organised around four themes: Finance and business planning; Leadership and talent; Innovation and technology; and Exporting. The site

also offers a live web chat facility with business advisers and the Business Support Helpline – 0300 456 3565.

[1] <https://southeastbusiness.org.uk/>

■ Tickets: Touting

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[18531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will increase the funding available for National Trading Standards investigations into secondary ticket abuse.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to tackling fraudulent practices in secondary ticketing. The department works closely with National Trading Standards to ensure they have adequate funding to tackle consumer detriment in the secondary ticketing market.

As a result of this work, earlier this month two individuals from London were found guilty of fraudulently and dishonestly buying and reselling tickets for high-profile music and entertainment events. They have now been sentenced to a combined six and a half years in jail. This landmark case marks the first successful prosecution against the fraudulent reselling of tickets on a large scale. This is directly a result of the work of National Trading Standards, North Yorkshire County Council, and City of York Council.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Andrew Sabisky

Jon Trickett:

[18450]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many contractors have been hired by the Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street since 12 December 2019.

Jon Trickett:

[18451]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the hiring of Andrew Sabisky was paid for with funds from the public purse.

Jon Trickett:

[18452]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Cabinet Secretary approved the hiring of Andrew Sabisky.

Jon Trickett:

[18453]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many contingent workers work for the Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street.

Jon Trickett:

[18454]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what was Andrew Sabisky's daily rate of pay as a contractor for the Government.

Jon Trickett: [\[18455\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what internal approval processes were followed on the hiring of Andrew Sabisky.

Jon Trickett: [\[18456\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Cabinet Office approved the hiring of Andrew Sabisky.

Jon Trickett: [\[18457\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Andrew Sabisky's employment was subject to (a) the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, (b) a Counter-Terrorist Check, (c) a Security Check or (d) Developed Vetting.

Jon Trickett: [\[18460\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the hiring of Andrew Sabisky required Ministerial approval.

Jon Trickett: [\[18461\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Andrew Sabisky was hired as (a) contingent labour or (b) as a consultant.

Jon Trickett: [\[18462\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Andrew Sabisky was (a) employed as a contractor and (b) subject to the civil service code when working for the Government.

Jon Trickett: [\[18463\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Dominic Cummings was involved in the recruitment of Andrew Sabisky as a special adviser.

Jon Trickett: [\[18464\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether civil servants raised concerns the recruitment of Andrew Sabisky as a special adviser.

Jon Trickett: [\[18473\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the recruitment process for Andrew Sabisky complied with the pre-employment controls set out in HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard.

Jon Trickett: [\[18474\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the contract signed by Andrew Sabisky stated the requirement for the application of the Baseline Personnel Security Standard.

Jon Trickett: [\[18475\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, who the designated Government contract manager was for the recruitment of Andrew Sabisky.

Jon Trickett: [\[18476\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether concerns were raised internally by Ministers on the employment of Andrew Sabisky.

Jon Trickett: [\[18477\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Andrew Sabisky's employment history was verified prior to his recruitment as a special adviser.

Jon Trickett: [\[18478\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he made of the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard in evaluating the suitability of Andrew Sabisky for employment in Government.

Jon Trickett: [\[18479\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Andrew Sabisky was employed as a special adviser on his Department's pay roll.

Jon Trickett: [\[18488\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister approved the appointment of Andrew Sabisky as a special adviser.

Jon Trickett: [\[18491\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many meetings did Andrew Sabisky attend as a Government advisor with (a) officials, (b) members of the Cabinet, and (c) the Prime Minister.

Jon Trickett: [\[18492\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Andrew Sabisky attended meetings where defence officials were present.

Jon Trickett: [\[18493\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government's contract with Andrew Sabisky has been terminated.

Jon Trickett: [\[18494\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether classified material was discussed at Government meetings attended by Andrew Sabisky.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[19747\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what Andrew Sabisky's (a) role, (b) title and (c) salary was during his employment as a special adviser.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[19748\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many advisers have been hired under the same arrangements as Andrew Sabisky.

Chloe Smith:

Further to the answer given by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions on 26 February 2020 ([Official Record, Vol.672, Col 313](#)), and the answers given by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and myself to Oral Questions and Topical Questions on 27 February 2020 ([Official Record, Vol.672, Col 456-457, 461-466](#)), Andrew Sabisky was hired as a contractor between 10 and 17 February, and not as a Special Adviser.

Contractors are subject to the principles of the Civil Service Code. Information about the numbers of contingent labour workers in the Cabinet Office, which also covers 10 Downing Street, is published annually.

Government contractors are paid for from departmental budgets. The Government does not normally comment on individual personnel matters such as pay, or recruitment processes. The Government also does not normally disclose the names of individual line managers.

It has been the practice of successive administrations that the Government does not disclose details of internal meetings. Classified information is made available only to those with appropriate security clearance and whose responsibilities require it.

It would be inappropriate to comment further on the vetting status, checks or contractual arrangements of any individual.

■ Cabinet Office: Huawei**Chi Onwurah:****[20486]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many representations (a) his Department and (b) the Prime Minister's Office has received from Huawei since 1 January 2019.

Chloe Smith:

Details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations are published quarterly on GOV.UK.

■ Cabinet Office: Rural Areas**Anne Marie Morris:****[19931]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how the Government defines rurality.

Chloe Smith:

There is an official statistical rural urban classification, based on the 2011 Census, which determines settlements with populations of 10,000 or more as urban. Further details of the rural urban classification can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/rural-urban-classification

The rural urban classification is intended to support statistical analysis. Other definitions of rural could be more appropriate in some policy or analytical contexts.

■ Cabinet Office: Staff**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[19859\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many senior civil servants appointed to positions in his private office had previously been (a) political appointees in the Cabinet Office and (b) employed by a political party since 2015.

Chloe Smith:

Information on Government Special Advisers is published regularly. Other Civil Servants are recruited in accordance with civil service recruitment principles.

■ Chequers**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[21289\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse of renovation works to Chequers has been in each the last five years up to and including February 2020.

Chloe Smith:

Chequers is run and managed by an independent trust. Details of any renovation works are a matter for the Chequers Trust.

■ Civil Servants: Work Experience**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[18716\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what university each intern on the Summer Diversity Internship Programme attended in each year since 2015.

Chloe Smith:

We do not currently cross-tabulate the information relating to university and the Summer Diversity Internship Programme. This could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Domestic Abuse: Disclosure of Information**Sir Mark Hendrick:** [\[21151\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) applications were made under the right to ask element of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) (b) disclosures were made as a result of the DVDS application and (c) proactive disclosures were made under the right to know element of that scheme to people who had not made an application for DVDS in each year since the introduction of that scheme in March 2014 in (a) Lancashire and (b) each police force area.

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[21152\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many disclosures made under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme were made within the 35 day time limit in each year since the introduction of the scheme in (a) Lancashire and (b) in each police force in England and Wales.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[21154\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) men and (b) women were killed by their partner or ex-partner in each of the last three years.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ21151_ 21152_ 21154.pdf]
2. UKSA Response - table [Table 1 for PQ 21151.xlsx]

■ **Elections**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18665\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Written Statement of 22 July 2019, Official Report, HCWS1772, what progress the Government has made on the defending democracy programme.

Chloe Smith:

The Defending Democracy programme is led by the Cabinet Office, working closely with other departments, to take forward work to:

- Protect and secure UK democratic processes, systems and institutions from interference, including from cyber, personnel and physical threats.
- Strengthen the integrity of UK elections, ensuring that they are fit for the digital age.
- Encourage respect for open, fair and safe democratic participation.
- Promote fact-based and open discourse, including online.

Details of further next steps to ensure electoral integrity will be announced in due course.

■ **Life Expectancy: North West**

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[20387\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the life expectancy of (a) women and (b) men in each of the last 10 years in (i) the North West, (ii) Merseyside, (iii) Wirral and (iv) Wallasey.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [2020.02.27 - PQ 20387 - UKSA.pdf]

■ Office for Veterans' Affairs: Staff

Stephanie Peacock: [\[21300\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many members of staff will be allocated to work for the Office for Veterans' Affairs.

Johnny Mercer:

There are 8 members of staff working in the Office for Veterans' Affairs with more staff, who have already been recruited, joining shortly. Plans to increase the Office for Veterans' Affairs beyond its current size are in place with recruitment due to begin shortly. Future increases in the size of the Office will be determined by the capacity it needs to ensure the United Kingdom becomes the best place to be a veteran anywhere in the world. Beyond the Office for Veterans' Affairs there are many Civil Servants across Government Departments working everyday to support this country's veterans.

■ Prime Minister: Staff

Emily Thornberry: [\[18593\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether members of 10 Downing Street staff with Developed Vetting security clearance are permitted to see unredacted Top Secret-classified material produced by his Department in relation to Russia.

Emily Thornberry: [\[18594\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether members of 10 Downing Street staff with Developed Vetting security clearance are permitted to see unredacted Top Secret-classified material produced by his Department in relation to NATO.

Emily Thornberry: [\[18595\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether members of 10 Downing Street staff with Developed Vetting security clearance are permitted to see unredacted Top Secret-classified material produced by his Department in relation to the Baltic States.

Emily Thornberry: [\[18596\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether members of 10 Downing Street staff with Developed Vetting security clearance are permitted to see unredacted Top Secret-classified material produced by his Department in relation to Ukraine.

Emily Thornberry: [\[18597\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether members of 10 Downing Street staff with Developed Vetting security clearance are permitted to see unredacted Top Secret-classified material produced by his Department in relation to Syria.

Chloe Smith:

10 Downing Street is an integral part of Cabinet Office.

Full details on the Government's vetting policy can be found via the [HMG Personnel Security Controls](#) published in May 2018.

As has been the practice of successive administrations, details of which employees have access to what material are confidential.

Bridget Phillipson:

[19858]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average hourly pay is of employees identified as (a) male, (b) female and (c) other gender identity at each grade in the Prime Minister's Office.

Chloe Smith:

The Prime Minister's Office is an integral part of the Cabinet Office and is included in this reply.

The Cabinet Office, along with other Government Departments, has published information about the gender pay gap in its workforce annually since 2017. The report for 2019 is available at <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/Employer/FukQglAW>.

■ Sunningdale Park

Jon Trickett:

[18482]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many of the (a) 103 apartments for people over 55 and (b) 168 new homes scheduled to be built on the former Government Civil Service College site at Sunningdale Park will be classed as affordable housing.

Chloe Smith:

Sunningdale Park was sold, generating £48.4 million for the public purse and unlocking surplus Government land for new homes.

Details of the proposed redevelopment, which has been granted planning permission, are available on the website of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council.

■ Veterans

Stephanie Peacock:

[19061]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress his Department has made on the implementation of the Government's Strategy for Our Veterans.

Johnny Mercer:

The [Strategy for our Veterans](#) sets out the Government's ambition to make the UK the best place to be a veteran anywhere in the world. In January the Government published its first Action Plan to deliver this strategy following a UK-wide consultation on how to implement it.

This plan included the creation of the Office for Veterans' Affairs, which this Government has already delivered, and that Office are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy. A number of the actions are already complete, such as the establishment of charity-facing posts within the Ministry of Defence and the recruitment of more Jobcentre Plus Armed Forces Champions, to help those who have left the military transition into employment. Progress is being made in all areas,

with a number of other commitments due to be completed in the coming months; these include the publication of a factsheet drawing together key data on veterans, and shortly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government will publish guidance for local authorities on allocating social housing for the Armed Forces community. In addition to the actions set out in the Strategy, we have already set out plans to introduce railcards for veterans and make it easier for veterans to get an interview for a job in the Civil Service.

Work on many of the other commitments in the consultation's action plan is in full swing, and the Government looks forward to announcing further progress over the coming months.

Stephanie Peacock: [19062]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Government's Strategy for Our Veterans will classify the very seriously injured as a priority group.

Johnny Mercer:

The [Strategy for Our Veterans](#) is inclusive of all veterans who access UK services, covering all experiences, conflicts and circumstances. As the Government works towards delivering the Strategy, it may be appropriate to provide certain cohorts of veterans with particular types of focused support to recognise their specific experiences or circumstances. As detailed within the Strategy for our Veterans UK Government Consultation Response, the Government already provides bespoke services to support the very seriously injured, such as the Integrated Personal Commissioning for Veterans (IPC4V) framework and benefit cap exemptions.

■ Veterans: Employment

Taiwo Owatemi: [20530]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to improve veterans' employment prospects.

Johnny Mercer:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to Oral Questions 4 and 21 on 27 February 2020 ([Official Record, Vol.672 Col 451](#)).

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Civil Proceedings

Mr Kevan Jones: [18621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 3 February 2020, Official report, column 3, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to tackle vexatious claims against armed forces personnel within 100 days of the new Parliament.

Johnny Mercer:

Yes, it remains the Government's intent to bring forward measures to provide our Service personnel and veterans with appropriate legal protections.

■ **Army****Nia Griffith:**[\[21186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to maintain the size of the British Army throughout the 2019 Parliament.

James Heappey:

The Government will undertake an integrated review of Britain's security, defence and foreign policy. This will examine how we strengthen and prioritise our alliances, diplomacy and development and will consider all aspects of our defence and security capabilities. A key strand of the review will explore how we modernise the equipment and improve the capability of our world-class Armed Forces, including that of the British Army.

■ **Clyde Naval Base: Security****Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**[\[18671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which contractor is responsible for perimeter security at Royal Naval Armaments Depot Coulport; and what the financial value is of that contract.

Jeremy Quin:

While the Ministry of Defence use private contractors where appropriate to undertake fencing and perimeter upkeep, the Naval base Commander at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde is responsible for security of the Royal Naval Armaments Depot Coulport, using Ministry of Defence Police, Ministry of Defence Guard Service and Armed Forces personnel to provide security monitoring, patrols and proportionate response.

■ **Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Finance****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[18620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much Government funding has been spent on the defence estate to facilitate the (a) delivery and (b) maintenance of the F-35b.

Jeremy Quin:

Significant infrastructure upgrades have taken place to facilitate the delivery and maintenance of the F-35b. To date c.£421 million has been spent.

■ Military Aircraft

Jamie Stone: [\[21274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times and at what cost to the public purse military aircraft were used for non-military purposes by companies with Government contracts in 2015.

Jamie Stone: [\[21275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times and at what cost to the public purse military aircraft were used for non-military purposes by companies with Government contracts in 2016.

Jamie Stone: [\[21276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times and at what cost to the public purse military aircraft were used for non-military purposes by companies with Government contracts in 2017.

Jamie Stone: [\[21277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times and at what cost to the public purse military aircraft were used for non-military purposes by companies with Government contracts in 2018.

Jamie Stone: [\[21278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times and at what cost to the public purse military aircraft were used for non-military purposes by companies with Government contracts in 2019.

Jeremy Quin:

We are only aware of military aircraft being used for the purposes of executing defence tasks.

■ Ministry of Defence: Lockheed Martin

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[21166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the level of consolidated damages payments made by Lockheed Martin to his Department was in each of the last five financial years.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not routinely use the term 'consolidated damages', so your question has been interpreted to mean 'liquidated damages'.

In 2017-18, the MOD recovered liquidated damages from Lockheed Martin worth £350,000. No other payments were recovered in the last five years.

■ Nuclear Submarines: Nuclear Weapons

Caroline Lucas:

[R] [\[18605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on procedures to provide nuclear submarine commanders on distant patrol with information to determine the legality of an order to fire a nuclear missile.

James Heappey:

The United Kingdom would not use any of its weapons, whether conventional or nuclear, contrary to international law. Only the Prime Minister can authorise the firing of nuclear weapons, with legal advice contributing to that decision, and the Commanding Officer of the ballistic missile submarine must confirm that the authorisation to fire meets the rigorous authentication processes in place.

We will not comment on the details of our submarine operations - including these authentication processes, what information is provided to the submarine and how information is provided to the submarine - for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

■ Nuclear Weapons

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[21226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the required lethality for the proposed Mark 7 nuclear warhead.

Jeremy Quin:

The Mk7 aeroshell is planned to be common to both the UK replacement warhead and the US W93. The Government is confident that the UK's replacement warhead will continue to deliver an effective, independent, minimum, credible deterrent. We are withholding information about the effectiveness of the UK replacement warhead for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

■ Type 23 Frigates

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[18617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has plans to delay the incremental retirement of the Type 23 frigates; and whether he has made an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of a sustainment programme for those frigates.

Jeremy Quin:

On current plans the last Type 23 frigate will transition out of service in 2035.

The Type 23 frigate class is continually being updated and upgraded to meet new threats or to replace obsolete technology. This is achieved via a Through Life Management Plan. With regard to the cost of the programme, this draws together a number of capability enhancements; the information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[21173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the service life of a Type 23 frigate is.

Jeremy Quin:

The Type 23 frigates have been in service since the 1980s and were originally designed with an 18-year life span. They have over the last thirty years become the mainstay of Royal Navy operations and are flexible vessels that have proven their versatility in warfighting, peacekeeping and maritime security operations around the globe. The Type 23 frigates are continually being updated and upgraded to meet new threats or to replace obsolete technology. This is achieved via a Through Life Management Plan.

On current plans the last Type 23 frigate will transition out of service in 2035.

■ Type 31 Frigates

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[21164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Type 31 will possess an anti-ship-missile capability.

Jeremy Quin:

Flexible by design, the Type 31 frigates will be adaptable to a range of capabilities, which may include an anti-ship missile system.

■ Veterans

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[19051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of medically discharged veterans that have experienced difficulties in finding adequate (a) housing, (b) employment and (c) healthcare.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[19052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support medically discharged veterans that are unable to access adequate (a) housing, (b) employment and (c) healthcare.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[19059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Office for Veterans Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on support for veterans who are medically discharged from the armed forces.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes the wellbeing of all veterans very seriously. MOD Ministers and officials have regular meetings with their counterparts in the Department for Health and Social Care and NHS England to ensure that the health needs of veterans in England, including those who are medically discharged, are properly considered.

Within the UK, veterans, including those who are medically discharged, access public sector services in the same way as their fellow civilians, through a combination of UK Government, Devolved Government and local authority provision. The unique circumstances of each nation and region mean that in practice the level and method of service can, and should, be different as they are tailored to local needs, even if the principles and broad outcomes are consistent. The UK Government will continue to work with service deliverers across the UK who support veterans to collect and analyse data to ensure that appropriate support is provided for those veterans who need it most.

As part of the ten-year vision articulated in the *Strategy for our Veterans*, in October 2019 the Ministry of Defence introduced a 'Defence Holistic Transition' policy. 'Defence Transition Services' (DTS) was established at the same time, to support those Service leavers who face the greatest challenges to making a successful transition to civilian life, including those who are medically discharged. The full-spectrum service is available to all Service leavers exiting the Armed Forces and is based on the needs of the individual, providing the specific support they may need and interventions to ensure issues are resolved. This support extends for two years after discharge and longer if necessary.

The long-established Career Transition Partnership (CTP) provides guidance to Service leavers in their transition from military to civilian life through a range of career and employment support services including skills development workshops, seminars, resettlement training advice, vocational training courses, career consultancy, one-to-one sessions and job finding support. A bespoke service is provided for the most vulnerable leavers through the CTP resettlement pathway. This function is called CTP Assist and delivers an individualised, needs-based service to those Service personnel who face the greatest barriers to employment as a consequence of their medical conditions. This comprehensive employment support is made available to all Service personnel subject to medical discharge in order to maximise their successful transition to civilian life. All military personnel can access CTP two years before leaving and within two years of leaving; beyond that point they can access The Forces Employment Charity (RFEA) which provides support for life.

Statistics on the estimated employment outcomes for ex-Service personnel who used the services provided by CTP, including those who have been medically discharged, can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/career-transition-partnership-ex-service-personnel-employment-outcomes-statistics-index>. The MOD also publishes annual statistical information on medical discharges among UK Regular Service personnel: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>

■ Veterans: Civil Proceedings

Stephen Farry: [\[18930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the capacity of the Northern Ireland criminal justice system to address vexatious investigations or prosecutions against veterans of the UK armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

Johnny Mercer:

Questions regarding the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland are for the relevant authorities. The Ministry of Defence remains committed to offering comprehensive legal and pastoral support for all veterans facing investigations as a result of their service on Operation Banner.

■ Warships

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[21162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the National Shipbuilding Strategy, whether it is his Department's policy to grow the fleet of the Royal Navy.

Jeremy Quin:

We remain committed to ensuring the Royal Navy has the ships and capabilities required to fulfil defence commitments now and in the future.

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.

■ Warships: Deployment

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[21161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to manpower shortages and delayed refit and retrofit programmes, whether the Royal Navy is able to put 19 destroyers and frigates to sea.

Jeremy Quin:

The Royal Navy has the workforce required to meet their commitments, and we remain committed to ensuring they have the ships and capabilities required to fulfil Defence commitments now and in the future.

■ Warships: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[21160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the tender for the fleet solid support ship contract includes the potential cost of the transfer of intellectual property to the UK Government in the event that that contract is not granted to a UK-based contractor.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend, the Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Johnny Mercer) gave him on 27 February 2020 in response to Question 19771.

Attachments:

1. 19771 - Warships Procurement [19771 - Warships Procurement.docx]

Gavin Robinson:[\[21307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress he has made on the Future Littoral Strike Ship.

Jeremy Quin:

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. The work already undertaken on the future Littoral Strike Ship will feed into this review.

Gavin Robinson:[\[21309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when procurement on Fleet Solid Support Ships will recommence.

Gavin Robinson:[\[21310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the renewed procurement for Fleet Solid Support Ships will be open to international competition.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for Defence People and Veterans (Johnny Mercer) to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones) on 27 February 2020 in response to Question 19771.

Attachments:

1. 19771 - Warships Procurement [19771 - Warships Procurement.docx]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 5G: Health Hazards****Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[21140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to investigate alternatives to 5G technology to reduce the risk of long-term exposure to wireless radiation; and if he will make a statement.

Matt Warman:

Exposure to radio waves is not new and health-related research has been conducted on this topic over several decades. Central to Public Health England's advice are the

guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). The ICNIRP is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation and its guidelines underpin health protection policies at UK and European levels.

Provided the ICNIRP guidelines are followed, there is no convincing evidence that 5G is dangerous. Government continues to be guided by Public Health England's advice on the matter. This states that while a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves under 5G is possible, such an increase would remain well within guidelines and can be expected to have no consequence on public health.

It is important to note that the ICNIRP guidelines apply up to 300 GHz, well beyond the maximum frequencies under discussion for 5G. It is also important to note that some 5G technology will use similar frequencies to existing communications systems. Other 5G technology may work at higher frequencies but would still be well within ICNIRP guidelines.

■ Artificial Intelligence

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[18959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to ensure (a) lines of accountability and (b) attributable liability for mistakes of artificial intelligence services.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Our future work related to attributable liability for mistakes of artificial intelligence services will be informed by independent expert advice. As part of its current work programme, the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation is conducting a review into the potential for bias in the use of algorithms and will publish its report in March 2020.

Other measures include promoting a more ethical use of data within government. For example, one of the seven principles of the UK's Data Ethics Framework is transparency about the tools, data and algorithms used to conduct work to enable greater scrutiny. The Framework encourages sharing models for algorithmic accountability and making data science tools available for scrutiny wherever possible.

Moreover, the Data Protection Act introduced the necessary safeguards such as the right to be informed of automated processing as soon as possible and the right to challenge an automated decision made by a data controller or processor.

■ Artificial Intelligence: Public Sector

Chi Onwurah:

[\[1992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government records instances of the use of Artificial Intelligence in the public sector.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Office for Artificial Intelligence worked with the Government Digital Service (GDS) and the AI-first consultancy Faculty to review where AI and data technologies

are being used across government, and where they can be used in the future to improve public services. As part of this work, we created 'A guide to using artificial intelligence in the public sector', updated this January 2020 and available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). This document provides a set of high-level guidelines for understanding how to deploy AI and data technologies.

To complement this work, the Office for AI has collaborated with the World Economic Forum to create a further set of guidelines for responsible public sector procurement of AI. Alongside draft guidelines for public procurement of AI, this work has also fed into a new dynamic purchasing system for AI, implemented by Crown Commercial Services, called the 'AI Marketplace'. Once established, the AI Marketplace will allow Government to better-procure AI & Data solutions from the best vendors. It will also facilitate understanding of where AI is being procured across Government.

GDS and the Office for National Statistics have also conducted a 'data science audit' to understand data science capability within teams across central and local government, and emergency services. Having such capabilities within the public sector workforce will ensure public bodies are well-placed to use data science, including AI technologies, to improve public service delivery. They will do so in-line with other Government principles and guidelines, such as the data ethics framework, to ensure the ethical use of data for AI.

■ Broadband

Alan Brown:

[18624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 11568, on Broadband, how much and what proportion of the funding for the Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme has been allocated to (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) England.

Matt Warman:

Currently, no funding is allocated for particular regions across the UK. The Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme is demand-led for Vouchers or Public building connectivity upgrades.

- For Vouchers, small businesses and residents in any part of the UK can apply for these via a portal <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>
- For Public Buildings, Government Departments (e.g. Department for Education for upgrade of Schools) or Local Authorities submit their public buildings to be assessed against the Programme's eligibility criteria. The value of these differs on a case by case basis, with all local authorities able to submit an interest to the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme by following the necessary instructions located on our [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rgc-programme-key-information) page <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rgc-programme-key-information>.
- The Rural Gigabit Connectivity team are currently actively exploring opportunities across Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland.

Alan Brown:

[\[18625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 11568, on Broadband, what steps his Department is taking to determine where the hardest to reach parts of the country are; how areas will be prioritised; what the timescales for the programme are; and if she will make a statement.

Matt Warman:

We will pursue an 'outside in' strategy to the delivery of gigabit-capable networks, meaning that while network competition serves the commercially feasible areas, the Government will simultaneously support investment in the most difficult to reach areas. The Government intends to invest £5bn in those areas that are likely to be unviable commercially for gigabit-capable network deployment and will require additional funding of some kind.

We are already connecting some of the hardest to reach places in the country through our Superfast broadband programme and £200 million Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme. In addition, we are currently working closely with industry, Local Authorities and Devolved Administrations to design this our new £5 billion programme - which includes determining how areas will be prioritised - to ensure we get the best possible value for money for taxpayers. We intend to start procuring contracts next year.

■ **Cinemas: Hearing Impairment**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[19853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of facilities in cinemas for deaf children and young people who require subtitles.

Caroline Dinenage:

I refer the hon. Member for Nottingham South to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the previous Minister for Sport, Media and Creative Industries (Nigel Adams) on 11 February, in response to question 13526.

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

Catherine West:

[\[739\]](#)

To ask the Minister of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of his Department's work is dedicated to sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

At 31 December 2019 DCMS employed 1,264 Civil Servants, 50 of whom worked directly on projects relating to sport. A significant number of staff cannot be directly linked to digital, culture, media or sport as they are either part of the corporate centre (e.g Finance and HR), part of cross-cutting teams working across multiple policy areas (e.g the department's Central Analytical Team) or part of teams which aren't

directly linked to any of these areas (e.g. the Office for Civil Society and the Gambling team).

This information relates to Civil Servants on DCMS' payroll. This includes permanent staff, those on fixed-term contracts, those on paid loan/secondment in/out of DCMS and those on paid maternity leave. DCMS also sponsors a number of Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) which work on projects related to sport, including Sport England, the Birmingham Organising Committee for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Sports Grounds Safety Authority, UK Anti-Doping, and UK Sport. Their total staff numbers are as follows:

SPORT ENGLAND	289
Birmingham Organising Committee for the 2022 Commonwealth Games	117
Sports Grounds Safety Authority	20
UK Anti-Doping	76
UK Sport	151

■ Economic Growth

Chi Onwurah:

[1986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish his Department's economic indicators by region.

Caroline Dinenage:

The department currently publishes four main economic indicators for DCMS sectors: gross value added (GVA), employment, business demographics, and trade. Of these, the first three are available by region:

- [GVA](#)
- [Number of business sites \(Table 6\)](#)
- [Employment \(Tables 3 – 10\)](#)

The exception is trade in goods and services, which are not produced by region. This is because regional analysis is not currently supported by the data available. The department is working with ONS to investigate whether it will be possible to produce estimates of trade in goods and services by region for DCMS sectors in the future.

Forthcoming publications are announced at least four weeks ahead of publication in the [Official Statistics Release Calendar](#), which is updated monthly.

■ Mobile Phones and Broadband: Shropshire**Mark Pritchard:****[18553]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to improve (a) mobile phone and (b) broadband coverage in (i) The Wrekin constituency and (ii) Shropshire; and what the timeframe is for improving that coverage.

Matt Warman:

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

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

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

According to Thinkbroadband, currently, 93.7% of Shropshire has access to superfast broadband - up from 5% in 2011. This improvement is thanks to the investment that both the government and Shropshire County council have made towards superfast rollout in Shropshire, including parts of Wrekin.

Taking into account the Council's current contracts with British Telecommunications plc (BT) and Airband Community Internet Ltd, together with additional commercial commitments, Shropshire County Council expect 97% of premises in the Council area will have access to superfast broadband by 2021.

The Wrekin constituency currently has 97% of premises with access to superfast speeds, up from 72% in 2011.

Our Voucher scheme through the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme is available to all rural areas in the UK and there are a number of providers who have been very active in utilising this and our previous voucher schemes in Shropshire, for example SWS Broadband who are headquartered in Shrewsbury.

■ Mobile Phones: Rural Areas

Richard Fuller:

[\[18508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to improve mobile phone coverage in (a) North East Bedfordshire constituency and (b) other rural areas.

Matt Warman:

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

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

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

■ Rugby: Finance

Catherine West:

[\[20519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what information his Department held on the Rugby Football Union's plans to reduce funding for championship clubs; and what steps he is taking to help ensure the viability of club rugby.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport does not hold any information on the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) plans to reduce funding for championship clubs. The stewardship of rugby union in England is the responsibility of the RFU, as the National Governing Body for the sport. The Government expects good governance from all our sports bodies, as set out in the sports governance code.

Through Sport England, government has invested £11.53m into grassroots rugby union in the three years to 2018/19. This includes investment in both the RFU as the national governing body for the sport, together with investment in specific community rugby union projects. Over this time period, Sport England has invested a further £12.61m in multi-sport projects where rugby union is one of the sports benefitting.

■ Sexting

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure online platforms do not host sexual content which has not been consented to by people who feature in it.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help ensure online platforms remove sexual content which has not been consented to by those who have been filmed or photographed.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to sanction online platforms which do not remove sexual content which has not been consented to by people who have been filmed or photographed.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Online Harms White Paper set out government's plans to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, enforced by an independent regulator. Companies will be required to take robust action to address harmful content and will be held to account for tackling a comprehensive set of online harms. Non-consensual sharing of private and sexual images, often known as "revenge pornography", is in scope of these proposals. The regulator will have sufficient powers to take effective action against companies that breach regulatory requirements, including the power to levy substantial fines.

We are also making sure the criminal law is fit for purpose. The Law Commission is conducting a second phase of its review of abusive and offensive online communications. As part of this, the Law Commission will also look at the criminal law around the non-consensual taking and sharing of intimate images, and make recommendations to ensure that the law provides effective protection against the creation and sharing of intimate images without consent.

■ Social Media: Suicide and Self-harm

Lee Anderson: [\[18963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to tackle social media platforms which promote harmful content relating to suicide and self-harm.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Online Harms White Paper set out government's plans to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, enforced by an independent regulator. As part of our plans, companies will be required to take action to address harmful suicide and self-harm content that provides graphic details of suicide methods and self-harming, including encouragement of self-harm and suicide.

There are already arrangements between companies and charities to improve the identification and removal of content when it is reported, and services that signpost help and supportive content to users. The Samaritans has a strategic partnership with social media companies and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). The partnership works together to set guidance on moderating suicide and self-harm content, and supporting users to stay safe online.

■ **Technology: International Cooperation**

Chi Onwurah:

[20488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what criteria are used to identify locations for his Department's International Tech Hubs.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport's International Tech Hub Network comprises Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil, India and Israel.

The purpose of the Hubs is to forge innovation partnerships between local tech sectors and UK and international businesses, stimulate local digital economies and build high-end digital skills.

The Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil and India Hubs are supported by the Prosperity Fund which focuses on middle income countries to promote inclusive economic growth, for example to improve key infrastructure, skills, access to finance and to build better business environments. These locations were selected based on potential to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth whilst increasing opportunities for international business partnerships that increase mutual prosperity. They offer the opportunity to pilot innovative digital inclusion solutions at scale, due to their level of overall economic and institutional development combined with the significant presence of digitally excluded or underserved populations.

■ **Tourism: West Midlands**

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[18443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase tourism in the West Midlands.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department has taken a number of steps to increase tourism in the West Midlands.

The £45m Discover England Fund supports the development of internationally marketed tourism products in the region. For example, the England's Waterways project encourages visitors to explore the canals in and around Birmingham and the Midlands, while the England's Originals project provides itineraries that include Worcester as a destination.

We are also working with regional partners to maximise the tourism benefits of hosting the UK City of Culture 2021 in Coventry and the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Andrew Selous:

[901018]

What assessment he has made of the capacity of further education colleges to meet future demand for training in (a) electric vehicle maintenance and (b) the building of zero energy bill homes.

Gillian Keegan:

We have been supporting colleges up and down the country to ensure they have the capacity to deliver provision for the future. We are working with the Construction sector to plan and deliver the skills needed to decarbonise the industry and create more energy efficient builds.

I was delighted to read that Central Bedfordshire College in my honourable friend's constituency has opened a £3.5 million Technology and Skills Centre to deliver the high-end technology and construction skills that businesses in his area need to thrive.

Dr Luke Evans:

[901019]

What progress his Department is making on improving school facilities.

Nick Gibb:

We have allocated over £7.4 billion since 2015 to maintain and improve the school estate. On top of this, the Priority School Building Programme is rebuilding or refurbishing buildings in the worst condition at over 500 schools.

We are looking carefully at capital funding for education in preparation for the next Spending Review.

Adam Afriyie:

[901020]

What steps he is taking to increase the use of technology by schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education's EdTech Strategy, 'Realising the potential of technology in education', aims to support educational providers to embed and use technology effectively to support teacher workload reductions, cost savings and improved student outcomes. This includes supporting schools and colleges to spread best practice in effective technology use through our Demonstrator Programme, which is due to launch in the Spring.

The Demonstrator Programme will help tech enabled schools and colleges to provide peer-to-peer support to other schools to help them use technology in the most effective way.

Mr David Davis:

[901022]

What progress he has made on implementing the recommendations of the Augar review of post-18 education and funding.

Michelle Donelan:

The Augar report recommended 53 changes to address some of the challenges and tensions in our higher education and further education systems. It is imperative that we get any such decisions rights. I can reassure my right hon. Friend that this government will conclude the review alongside the next Spending Review.

Sam Tarry:

[901025]

What steps he is taking to reduce the cost to parents of school uniforms.

Nick Gibb:

No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to the school of their choice. The Government is pleased to support the Private Member's 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 issues non-statutory best practice guidance which can be found here:

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

Our guidance clearly states that 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.

Kate Osborne:

[901026]

What recent estimate he has made of the number of looked after children being placed in out-of-area placements as a result of the unavailability of a place in their home local authority.

Vicky Ford:

The most recent figures show that 20% of all looked-after children were placed more than 20 miles from home, which is a concern.

Moving a child away from their home area is not a decision to be taken lightly and we have strengthened legislative safeguards in relation to children placed out of their local area. The needs of the child are paramount when deciding the right care placement. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient provision for their looked after children.

We want to reduce out of area placements, but they will always be part of the care landscape. Sometimes circumstances make it the right decision for a child to be placed elsewhere, for example when they are at risk from sexual exploitation, trafficking or gang violence.

We're helping to improve commissioning of placements, including providing funding through our £200 million children's social care Innovation Programme. We are also providing seed funding to fostering partnerships to increase sufficiency of foster parents.

We have committed to undertaking a review of the care system. We have been clear that this review will be bold and broad, taking a fundamental look across children's social care, with the aim of better supporting, protecting and improving the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people.

Anthony Mangnall:

[901029]

What steps his Department is taking to ensure a balance between academic and vocational training in the development of further education courses.

Gillian Keegan:

This Department takes very seriously the need to deliver further education courses that serve the needs of learners and employers alike.

New employer-designed T Levels will launch in September, combining classroom learning with a meaningful industry placement. The Department is also taking steps to improve other qualifications available to students post-16, ensuring that they will have access to high quality provision that is truly valued by employers.

■ Academies: Children in Care

Preet Kaur Gill:

[18821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times he has used his power to direct academies in (a) Edgbaston constituency, (b) the West Midlands and (c) Birmingham to accept looked-after children in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The School Admissions Code requires admission authorities of all schools to prioritise looked-after children and previously looked-after children in their admissions criteria. Academies, trusts and local authorities work together at a local level to prioritise the admission of looked-after children. As a last resort, a local authority can request a direction for the academy to admit a looked after child from my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

ESFA has collected and recorded data on such directions since March 2017. Since then, no such directions have been issued to an academy in the Edgbaston constituency. In the West Midlands as a whole, two such directions have been issued, one of which was in Birmingham.

Published guidance on academy admissions can be found on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-admissions> .

■ Apprentices

Robert Halfon:

[18383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to promote apprenticeships to young people in (a) Harlow and (b) the UK.

Gillian Keegan:

We have introduced a wide range of reforms to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to encourage employers across England to create more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities.

Since May 2010, there have been 4,392,000 apprenticeship starts in England. Of these, 7,200 apprenticeships starts have been in the Harlow parliamentary constituency.

From August 2020, all starts will be on the new apprenticeship standards which are replacing existing frameworks. These are designed and driven by industry to create apprenticeships that are high-quality providing employers in Harlow, and across England, with the skills they need. Over 510 standards have already been approved for delivery to apprentices.

We are working hard to encourage take up of our apprenticeship programme. The third phase of the Fire it Up campaign launched in January 2020 with a planned media investment for this phase of £2.9 million. It is targeting certain groups to widen participation in apprenticeships. Our 13th annual National Apprenticeship Week took place in February 2020. Nearly 900 events were held across the country, aiming to change perceptions of apprenticeships.

In January 2018, we introduced a legal requirement for schools to give training providers the chance to talk to pupils about technical qualifications and apprenticeships, so that young people hear about the alternatives to academic routes.

We also offer a free service to schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges (ASK) programme to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and support to enable them to promote apprenticeships to their students. In the last academic year, ASK reached over 300,000 students throughout England. In Harlow, ASK has worked with 8 schools and colleges and has engaged with 840 students in the last three academic years.

In the 2019-20 financial year, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England is over £2.5 billion – double what was spent in 2010. This is supporting employers of all sizes, across England, to provide high-quality apprenticeship opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. We are moving smaller employers onto our award-winning apprenticeship service to give them a greater choice of training providers. They can also benefit from transferred funds from levy payers. Levy transfers can help to support new starts in supply chains and address local skills needs.

Essex County Council and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership are members of the East of England Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. They are working with local employers to take advantage of transfers to support more small- and medium-sized employers in the area to offer apprenticeships.

■ **Apprentices: Disadvantaged**

Lee Anderson:

[\[18966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to promote apprenticeships as an alternative to university for school leavers from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds.

Gillian Keegan:

Degree apprenticeships offer people of all ages and from all backgrounds the chance to earn while they learn and access a range of professions. We are committed to continuing to raise the profile of higher and degree apprenticeships as a genuine, high-quality alternative to traditional academic study, and want to make sure we reach those from disadvantaged areas and backgrounds who might not otherwise have considered higher education as an option.

In addition to our awareness-raising work through the Fire it Up marketing campaign, National Apprenticeship Week, and in conjunction with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), we have introduced a range of targeted programmes to widen participation in apprenticeships, with a particular focus on higher and degree apprenticeships.

Our Apprenticeships Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme continues to work in schools and colleges in disadvantaged areas, providing free resources to support teachers to inform and inspire young people and introduce them to the range of apprenticeship opportunities available. Within the ASK programme, a Priority Schools pilot project supports 40 schools across England to provide disadvantaged students with information on apprenticeships.

‘Opportunities through Apprenticeships’, a pilot project launched in November 2018, seeks to encourage apprenticeship starts in sectors that offer higher wage-earning potential and progression opportunities. Four local authorities involved in this pilot – Portsmouth, Nottingham, South Tyneside, and Torbay – are leading local projects to identify skills gaps, encourage new training provision, and promote apprenticeships to people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

■ **Apprentices: Prisoners**

Robert Halfon:

[\[18578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to introduce prison apprenticeships with the same standards as other apprenticeships.

Robert Halfon: [\[18579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on (a) developing, (b) overseeing and (c) monitoring a prison apprenticeship programme.

Robert Halfon: [\[18580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with employers on implementing an apprenticeship program for prisoners.

Robert Halfon: [\[18751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of sectors that would be suitable for a potential prison apprenticeship scheme.

Robert Halfon: [\[18754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the length of time required to develop models of delivery for prison apprenticeships.

Robert Halfon: [\[18755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of an apprenticeship scheme for prisoners.

Gillian Keegan:

Apprenticeships are paid jobs which include high-quality on-the-job and off-the-job training. All apprentices must hold a contract of employment, which means they are not currently available to prisoners.

The government recognises how important it is that those in custody are given the support, training, and routes into employment that best meets the needs of individuals, and their future employers. The department's apprenticeship programme is supporting this by working with the Department for Work and Pensions, Youth Offending teams and local employers, to consider pilot schemes which promote and encourage apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities to ex-offenders and those at risk of offending aged 16-24.

The Ministry of Justice also supports a wider range of provision to support prisoners into employment on release and governors can now commission specific provision aimed at meeting the needs of their prisoners and local labour markets. This includes the New Futures Network, created in 2018 to broker partnerships between prisons and employers, helping businesses fill skills gaps and prisoners to find employment on release. Information, advice and guidance services are also available in prisons to help prisoners identify career aims and work towards achieving these.

The Department for Education and the Ministry of Justice are at the early stages of exploring the potential costs and benefits of the various options for a potential future prison apprenticeships programme to complement existing schemes. We would expect that a prison apprenticeship programme will need to use the same standards and frameworks as all apprenticeships.

At this time, we have not made any estimates of the time required to develop models of delivery for prison apprenticeships. We will consider any discussions with employers and Cabinet colleagues once we have first established the practicalities and value of a potential prison apprenticeship programme.

■ **Apprentices: Shropshire**

Mark Pritchard:

[18555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to promote apprenticeships in (a) The Wrekin constituency and (b) Shropshire.

Gillian Keegan:

We have introduced a wide range of reforms to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to encourage employers across England to create more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. This year, 2019-20, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England is over £2.5 billion; double what was spent in 2010.

Since May 2010 there have been 4,392,000 apprenticeship starts in England. Of these 35,260 apprenticeships starts have been in Shropshire unitary authority, with 18,090 in The Wrekin parliamentary constituency.

From August 2020 all starts will be on the new apprenticeship standards which are replacing frameworks. These are designed and driven by industry to create apprenticeships that are high-quality, providing employers in Shropshire and across England, with the skills they need. Over 510 standards have already been approved for delivery to apprentices.

We are working hard to encourage take up of our apprenticeship programme. The third phase of the Fire it Up campaign launched in January, targeting groups to widen participation in apprenticeships. Our 13th annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) took place in February. Nearly 900 events were held across the country, aiming to change perceptions of apprenticeships.

To ensure that young people hear about all the education and employment options available to them, in January 2018 we introduced a legal requirement for schools to give training providers the chance to talk to pupils about technical qualifications and apprenticeships. We offer a free service to schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) project to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and support to enable them to promote apprenticeships to their students. In the last academic year, ASK reached over 300,000 students.

We are working with Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Local Authorities, to develop a sub-regional Apprenticeship Ambassador Network for the Shropshire area. This will also include a Young Ambassador Network. We are working closely with CapGemini and West Midlands NHS Partnership Trust to develop their apprenticeship programmes and recruitment in the local area. We are also supporting an apprenticeship and skills event in March where employers and colleges from the Shropshire/Telford/Hereford areas will be promoting apprenticeships.

■ Apprentices: Transport

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[18836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allocating funding for the transport costs of children aged (a) 16, (b) 17 and (c) 18 in (i) special education, (ii) further education and (iii) educational day release for apprenticeships.

Gillian Keegan:

The statutory responsibility for transport to education and training for 16 to 19-year-olds rests with local authorities, enabling them to make decisions and arrangements which best match local needs and circumstances.

Following the introduction of Raising the Participation Age legislation in 2013, the government investigated the feasibility of mandating local authorities to provide subsidised or free transport for young people post-16. Following this assessment, the department found that this approach would be both prohibitively expensive and would offer poor value for money.

The current arrangements, whereby support is provided by local authorities, transport providers, schools and colleges, alongside the 16-19 Bursary Fund, are the most cost effective solutions, and they enable local government and other organisations to tailor support in the most appropriate way according to local circumstances and needs.

■ English Language and Mathematics: GCSE

Neil O'Brien:

[\[18949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, since the introduction of the GCSE resit policy for maths and English, how many and what proportion of 16-18 year olds resat (a) maths GCSE, (b) English GCSE and (c) both maths and English GCSE by (i) household income and (ii) special education needs.

Neil O'Brien:

[\[18950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, since the introduction of the GCSE resit policy for maths and English in England, how many and what proportion of students resitting sat those exams (a) once, (b) twice and (c) more than twice.

Neil O'Brien:

[\[18951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, since the introduction of the GCSE resit policy in maths and English, how many and what proportion of 16-18 year olds resat (a) maths GCSE, (b) English GCSE and (c) maths and English GCSE and were also enrolled on (i) Level 3 courses, (ii) Level 2 courses, (iii) Level 1 courses and (iv) other courses.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not routinely available in 16 to 18 publications and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The closest available information can be found in tables 11a and 11b as part of the 'A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2018 to 2019 (revised)' [1] national statistics, which were released on the 23 January 2020.

Students who are continuing to study English and mathematics, who are not yet at the end of 16 to 18 study, or who had previously achieved a grade 4/C or above in these subjects, will not be included in these figures.

[1] A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2018 to 2019 (revised):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results-2018-to-2019-revised>. Please refer to table 11a "Matrix of prior attainment and progress point scores in GCSE English and other English qualifications by students at the end of 16-18 studies", and table 11b "Matrix of prior attainment and progress point scores in GCSE mathematics and other mathematics qualifications by students at the end of 16-18 studies".

■ Free School Meals

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[21328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of pupils who are entitled for free school meals on the grounds of low household income but are not registered to receive them, by local authority.

Vicky Ford:

The provision of free school meals to children from out of work families or those on low incomes is of the utmost importance to this government. There are currently 1.3 million pupils eligible for and claiming a free nutritious school meal, saving families around £400 per year.

We do not routinely collect information on the proportion of pupils that would be entitled to a free school meal but do not make a claim. Our most recent estimate is that take-up is around 89% of those who are entitled.

Whilst take-up of free school meals is strong, we want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. To support this, we provide an Eligibility Checking System to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities. We have also developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals and we provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

■ Further Education: Finance

Zarah Sultana:

[18869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what impact assessments the Government has conducted on cessation of funding for post-16 qualifications.

Gillian Keegan:

The government is taking forward a review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below. The first stage consultation on this review was published in March 2019, alongside a general impact assessment and an equalities impact assessment. Details of this review can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-3-and-below-in-england>.

For the majority of our proposals, these were initial assessments as the first stage consultation set out high level principles for reform rather than firm proposals for change on which full detailed impact assessments could be based. The second stage consultation, which will follow later in 2020, will contain specific proposals for change. The government will publish a corresponding detailed impact assessment, including equalities impacts, alongside this consultation.

For one area where we are making early progress on the review, we set out a full impact assessment alongside the March consultation. This is where we are removing funding approval for qualifications where we have a reformed version approved for performance tables running in parallel. Funding for these “pre-existing” qualifications will be removed in August 2020. The impact assessment can be found at:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/post-16-level-3-and-below-qualifications-review/supporting_documents/Post%2016%20level%203%20and%20below%20qualifications%20review%20%20Impact%20Assessments.pdf.

Funding will be removed from these qualifications in August 2020. The impact assessments published in March last year addressed this.

The first stage consultation also set out our intention to remove funding approval for qualifications with low and no publicly funded enrolments. On 13 February 2020 the Department for Education announced the process to identify which of these qualifications will have funding approval removed from August 2021. This included publication of an initial list of qualifications with low and no publicly funded enrolments in scope of the process. This process requires awarding organisations to notify the Department if they believe funding approval should be retained, subject to specific criteria including whether the removal of public funding approval for the qualification will have a significant adverse impact upon a particular group of students, a provider, or occupational or geographic area. The department intends to publish the final list in July 2020 of qualifications that will have approval for public funding withdrawn from August 2021. An impact assessment will be published at this point.

■ Higher Education: Industrial Disputes**Olivia Blake:****[21330]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help resolve the ongoing industrial dispute between the Universities and Colleges Employers Association, Universities UK and the University and College Union.

Olivia Blake:

[21333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with (a) Universities UK, (b) Universities & Colleges Employers Association and (c) the University and College Union on the employer's offer and the union's industrial action prior to the commencement of the ongoing strike.

Olivia Blake:

[21334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with (a) Universities and Colleges Employers Association and (b) Universities UK on (a) changes to the level of university staff pay, (b) the gender and BAME pay gap in higher education, (c) staff workloads in that sector and (d) the use of casual contracts in that sector.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities are independent institutions and are responsible for their own decisions on employment contracts and pay and pension provision. We expect universities, like all employers, to give due consideration to their obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the way their employment practices affect different sections of their communities and staff at different stages of their careers.

While respecting the independence of the sector, it is important that universities consider the impact of short-term and casual contracts on staff, students and the overall sustainability of teaching and research in this country. We also expect universities to follow best employment practices to ensure all staff, regardless of race and gender, have the opportunity to progress in their careers. Where there are disparities in pay that may be based on race or gender they must be addressed. We encourage universities to make use of tools such as the Race Equality and Athena Swan Charters to help identify and address institutional and cultural barriers that affect ethnic minority staff and students.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education met the General Secretary of the University and College Union (UCU) in September 2019. This meeting addressed a range of issues affecting both further and higher education, including both the pay and pensions disputes. However, as government has no direct role in the management of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension or agreeing the employment terms and conditions of staff, we have not been involved in the substance of the negotiations in either dispute.

The quality of higher education and the learning and opportunities it offers for students are priorities for this government. The department welcomes the on-going talks that are taking place between UCU and employers on pay, working conditions and equalities as well as those looking at the long-term stability and affordability of the USS pension. We encourage all sides to redouble their efforts to find solutions that will result in a positive outcome for universities, staff and students.

■ History: Textbooks

Dr Matthew Offord:

[18825]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he takes to ensure the accuracy of information in Key Stage 3 history textbooks.

Nick Gibb:

It is for education publishers to ensure that their textbooks are accurate, and for schools to determine the textbooks and other curriculum resources they wish to buy and how to use them in classrooms.

The Department is currently piloting an approach to curriculum resources through the Curriculum Fund. The aim is to establish how high-quality, complete curriculum programmes in history, geography and science can support teaching in these subjects, reducing teacher workload and improving pupil outcomes. The early findings from independent research on the pilots published on 11 October 2019 are promising, and can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-curriculum-programme-pilot-early-findings.

■ Music: Primary Education

Greg Smith:

[19896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of primary schools in England have a dedicated music teacher.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[18424]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the cost has been to the public purse of rebranding the National College for High Speed Rail as the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure.

Gillian Keegan:

The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure is an independent organisation. While the college has received revenue funding support from the department, its expenditure, including on branding, is governed and managed by the College itself. Any information about on the costs of rebranding are likely to be available in the College's annual accounts once they are published.

■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure: Inspections

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[18423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what legal costs have been incurred by the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure formerly known as the National College for High Speed Rail in relation to proceedings on the publication of Ofsted's report on the college.

Gillian Keegan:

The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure is an independent organisation. Legal expenditure is governed and managed by the College itself. Any information about this is likely to be available in the college's annual accounts once they are published.

■ Overseas Students: Entry Clearances**Martyn Day:**[\[21336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of potential changes in the number of university enrolments at Scottish universities among overseas (a) undergraduates and (b) postgraduates as a result of the implementation of the proposed immigration system.

Michelle Donelan:

EU and non-EU students make an invaluable contribution to the whole of the UK's higher education sector, socially, culturally and financially. This is why the UK Government will continue to welcome international students, working towards the ambition set out in our International Education Strategy, to host 600,000 international students per year by 2030.

The latest Higher Education Statistics Agency data shows that there are 58,000 international students enrolled in Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), an increase of 7% from 2017/18. The number of EU-domiciled students enrolled at Scottish HEIs has remained relatively stable since 2017/18 (decreasing by 0.5%). The number of non-EU-domiciled students enrolled at Scottish HEIs has increased by 12% since 2017/18. Undergraduate and postgraduate students will be covered by the points-based immigration system. This will improve on the current system by simplifying and streamlining the student route for both students and sponsors.

To ensure the UK higher education sector remains internationally attractive, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced the new Graduate Route in September 2019. This will offer an opportunity for international students who have passed their degree to stay and work in the UK for two years post-study.

This announcement enables higher education providers to recruit for the 2020/21 academic year on the basis that their students will be eligible for the graduate route, and ensures that all existing students who meet the requirements, and have Tier 4 leave at the point that the route is introduced will be able to benefit. Education in Scotland is a devolved matter.

■ Physical Education**Peter Aldous:**[\[18844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to promote physical literacy and competitive sport within schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is already taking significant steps to promote physical literacy and competitive sport in schools. Through the Primary Physical Education and Sport Premium, we have invested over £1 billion of ring-fenced funding to primary schools to improve physical education (PE) and sport since 2013. Positive outcomes reported by schools include increases in the level of competitive sport, increases in the proportion of children doing 30 minutes of activity each day at school, and increases in teacher knowledge and confidence.

The Government also provides support for competitive sport through the School Games programme funded by Sport England and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust. It provides events at local, regional and national levels in 40 different sports. Schools can also enter competitions run by the different National Governing Bodies for sports.

The Department is working with DCMS to develop further proposals to deliver on the manifesto commitment to invest in primary school PE teaching and ensure that it is being properly delivered to develop physical literacy. We will also build on our existing School Sport and Activity Action plan to do more to help schools make good use of their sports facilities including for competitive sport. Proposals will be confirmed later in the year.

■ Postgraduate Education: Fees and Charges**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[18386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of abolishing application fees for postgraduate students; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education providers in England are autonomous bodies and therefore have discretion over the application fees they charge for postgraduate courses.

■ Pupil Premium**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[21327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much pupil premium schools have used in each category in the most recent two years for which data is available.

Nick Gibb:

In each of the last two years, we have allocated £2.4 billion to schools through the pupil premium to enable them to improve their disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. The allocations, by category of pupil premium, are published for 2018-19 and 2019-20 on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2019-to-2020>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2018-to-2019>.

While head teachers are empowered to use the grant in ways that best serve their schools, we look to them to use the money well, taking account of effective practice evidence. The Education Endowment Foundation's 'Pupil Premium Guide' recommends that schools focus their pupil premium on developing high quality teaching, targeted academic programmes and wider strategies that support pupils' readiness to learn. Schools are required to publish details of their pupil premium strategy and its impact and Ofsted looks at provision for disadvantaged pupils during school inspection.

■ Schools: Discipline

Bridget Phillipson:

[20470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools in (a) Houghton and Sunderland South constituency, (b) the North East and (c) England have placed disruptive children in isolation booths in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not collect or record information about schools' use of isolation.

Existing guidance makes clear that schools can adopt a policy which allows disruptive pupils to be placed in isolation away from other pupils for a limited period.

The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>.

If a school uses isolation as a disciplinary penalty, this should be made clear in their behaviour policy. As with other disciplinary penalties, schools must act lawfully, reasonably and proportionately in all cases. The school must also ensure the health and safety of all pupils.

Ms Angela Eagle:

[21157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools in (a) the North West (b) Merseyside and (c) the Wallasey constituency have placed disruptive children in isolation booths in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not collect or record information about schools' use of isolation.

Guidance allows schools to adopt a policy for disruptive pupils to be placed in isolation away from other pupils for a limited period. If a school uses isolation as a disciplinary penalty, this should be made clear in their behaviour policy. As with other disciplinary penalties, schools must act lawfully, reasonably and proportionately in all cases. The school must also ensure the health and safety of all pupils.

The existing guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>.

■ Schools: Finance

Robert Halfon: [\[18756\]](#)

to ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to ensure adequate funding for schools.

Robert Halfon: [\[18791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate funding for schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is giving schools the largest cash boost in a decade, investing a total of £14 billion additional funding for schools over the next three years. This will allow school funding to increase by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, followed by increases of £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to 2019-20.

We will continue to distribute funding through the National Funding Formula (NFF), which ensures that funding is based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. This will ensure that per-pupil funding for every school can rise at least in line with inflation next year; and faster than inflation for most. On average schools are attracting 4.2% more per pupil.

We have also recently laid regulations in Parliament which give legal force to the new minimum per pupil funding levels. This will allow us to aid the lowest funded schools to ensure that every secondary school attracts at least £5,000 per pupil next year, and every primary school at least £3,750 – on the path to receiving at least £4,000 per pupil the following year.

Finally, we have removed the gains cap in the NFF for 2020-21, so that all schools will attract their full allocations under the formula. This means that we can deliver the greatest gains to areas historically underfunded to ensure that they have the right investment to deliver an outstanding education.

The Department will continue to move towards a 'hard' national formula as soon as possible, meaning a single national formula will determine every school's final budget, rather than it being set independently by each local authority. We will work closely with local authorities and the sector in making this transition carefully.

■ Schools: North East Bedfordshire

Richard Fuller: [\[18514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of schools in the North East Bedfordshire constituency were rated by Ofsted as (a) good and (b) outstanding in (i) 2010 and (ii) at their last inspection.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is published by Ofsted.

For the North East Bedfordshire constituency, Ofsted's data shows that the percentage of schools rated as either good or outstanding has remained stable; 82% in 2010 and 83% in 2019.

As of 31 August 2010, 53% of schools in the constituency were rated as good and 29% of schools were rated as outstanding. The equivalent figures for England were 50% and 18% respectively.

The latest available data is for 31 August 2019, which shows 68% of schools in the constituency were rated as good and 15% of schools were rated as outstanding. The equivalent figures for England were 66% and 20% respectively.

■ Sixth Form Education: Finance

Helen Hayes: [21391]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for sixth form students.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend, Michelle Donelan, gave on 28 January 2020 to Question [5550](#), in her role as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families.

■ Sixth Form Education: VAT

Emma Hardy: [18893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 Feb 2020 to Question 10455, whether his Department holds data on the cost to sixth form colleges of VAT in the last five financial years.

Gillian Keegan:

The department does not collate or produce a figure for the total VAT paid by sixth form colleges.

■ Soft Drinks: Taxation

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [18515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how his Department plans to allocate the £455m from the soft drinks industry levy to fund children's (a) health and (b) access to healthy food.

Vicky Ford:

As indicated on page 175 in the Office for Budget Responsibility's March 2019 Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the government is forecast to receive around £340 million from the soft drinks industry levy in 2020-21. The March 2019 report on Economic and Fiscal Outlook can be found here:

<https://obr.uk/efo/economic-fiscal-outlook-march-2019/>.

The department will provide details of how our share of funding will be allocated to specific programmes in due course. Previously we have used funding from the levy to fund programmes that improve children's health such as the PE and Sport Premium for primary schools and the national breakfast clubs programme.

■ **Speech and Language Disorders: Children**

Helen Hayes:

[20532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Health and Social Care on developing a cross government strategy to support children with speech, language and communication needs.

Vicky Ford:

Ministers and officials from the department and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) are in regular contact and are working together to implement the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms underpinned by the Children and Families Act 2014.

This includes discussions about the needs of children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and how, across the government, we can address them. For example, both departments worked closely in responding to the Bercow 10 Years On report and other reports, which have raised a range of important issues for children and young people, including those with SLCN, which were relevant to both departments.

The department has also established the SEND System Leadership Board, which aims to improve strategic commissioning and joint working between education, health and social care partners for all SEND conditions, and includes membership from DHSC. Better joint commissioning and joint working are a high priority for Government and critical for improving services for children and young people with SEND, including those with SLCN.

However, we recognise that there are concerns with the SEND system. We announced the SEND Review in September 2019 to ensure the system is working best for all families – including those who have children with SLCN - and that support in different areas is consistent, available and joined up across health, care and education services. This department is working closely with DHSC on the Review.

■ **Teachers: Pay**

Helen Hayes:

[21392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to extend eligibility for the Teachers' Pay Grant to sixth form colleges.

Helen Hayes:

[21393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to extend eligibility for Early-career payments to teachers in sixth form colleges.

Nick Gibb:

Sixth form colleges have a different legal status and relationship to the Government when compared with schools. They are independent of the Government and the Department plays no role in setting their pay and conditions. Therefore, they are not eligible for the Teachers' Pay Grant or the Early Career Payments for school teachers. The Department continues to work closely with the further education (FE) sector to consider how best to support its needs.

We have announced a 16-19 funding increase of £400 million for 2020-21 – the biggest injection of new money into 16-19 education in a single year since 2010. This includes a 4.7% increase in the 16-19 base rate of funding and £20 million of new funding for the FE workforce.

■ Teachers: Training

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[18551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to provide financial support to students that are undertaking teacher training courses and were not eligible for a bursary in September 2019.

Nick Gibb:

All students undertaking a non-salaried initial teacher training (ITT) course can apply for financial support from Student Finance England. The standard student finance offer is available to both undergraduate and postgraduate non-salaried trainee teachers, regardless of whether or not they are also eligible for an ITT bursary.

The student finance offer for these trainee teachers includes a means-tested maintenance loan to support their living costs. Additional grant funding is also available to those who have children, adult dependents or a disability. Finally, all non-salaried trainee teachers can apply for a tuition fee loan, so they do not need to pay fees upfront.

Helen Hayes:

[\[20531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to improve training for teaching staff when supporting children with speech, language and communication needs.

Nick Gibb:

We are committed to supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). The Government has increased local authorities' high needs funding by £780 million in 2020-21, boosting the budget by 12% and bringing the total spent on supporting those with the most complex needs to over £7 billion for 2020-21.

We know that the quality of teaching is the most important in-school factor for improving the outcomes for all children and that this is particularly important for pupils with additional needs.

The Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework has been designed around how to support all pupils to succeed and seeks to widen access for all, including those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.

To support this, there are a series of online training materials for teachers with a focus on the most prevalent forms of SEND. This includes a module on SLCN. These materials can be found on the SEND Gateway at:

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/advanced-training-materials-for-autism-dyslexia-speech-language-and-communication-emotional-social-and-behavioural-difficulties-moderate-learning-difficulties_1.html.

■ Universities Superannuation Scheme

Olivia Blake:

[21335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Universities UK and the Universities Superannuation Scheme on the joint expert panel's valuation of that scheme.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities are independent institutions and are responsible for their own decisions on employment contracts and pay and pension provision. The government has no direct role in relation to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension, beyond regulation as applied to all work-based pension schemes by The Pensions Regulator. As government has no direct role in the management of the USS pension, we have not been involved in the substance of the negotiations in the dispute.

The department welcomes the establishment of the Joint Expert Panel and the contribution they have made in seeking to secure a long term and sustainable resolution to the USS dispute. The issues involved with the valuation of USS are complex and central to the ongoing dispute. We are unable to comment on the actuarial detail of the first report of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP 1), which made an alternative valuation to the USS pension using a different set of assumptions to the previously contested USS valuation. However, we note that after sustained negotiation the recommendations of this report were not adopted in full and that the Pensions Regulator supported this decision.

The Joint Expert Panel published a second report (JEP 2) in December 2019. JEP 2 does not offer a new scheme valuation. JEP 2 makes a series of linked recommendations covering USS governance, the valuation methodology and the way forward. This includes the establishment of a new, jointly agreed purpose statement and shared valuation principles and agreement to a more appropriate valuation methodology.

The department understands that the Pensions Regulator has indicated support for the high-level recommendations of the JEP 2 report. Universities UK, USS and the UCU have all expressed support for the recommendations of the JEP 2 report and the opportunity it presents to resolve the ongoing dispute.

■ Universities: Disclosure of Information

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[18638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he has plans to tackle the use by universities of non-disclosure agreements for student grievances.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has a clear expectation that all employers, including universities, should only use non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) where appropriate and necessary. Any misuse of NDAs by universities to hide workplace discrimination or harassment or to withhold details of student complaints is completely unacceptable and not only can distress individuals but also risks bringing our world-leading higher education system into disrepute.

Although there is a range of legitimate reasons why universities may use NDAs including, for example, the protection of commercially sensitive information related to university research, we recognise their misuse is an area of concern. The government consulted on the misuse of confidentiality clauses in employer/employee relationships in 2019, and in response announced that we will legislate to prevent the misuse of NDAs in the workplace – including those being used to cover up harassment and discrimination. This will strengthen protections for individuals and create a fairer workplace for all.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is the independent body set up to review student complaints in England and Wales. They also provide good practice guidance on resolving student complaints more generally and have published a briefing note for providers on handling complaints involving sexual misconduct and harassment.

The OIA view is that it is not normally appropriate or in the spirit of their scheme to expect a student to sign a complicated or legally binding settlement agreement, or to sign a confidentiality clause. To do so may mean that any lessons to be learned from the complaint are lost.

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

The Office for Students (OfS) is currently consulting on its approach to regulation and its expectations for providers in addressing sexual misconduct and harassment in their institutions. This consultation closes on 27 March 2020. Government officials meet at least quarterly with both the OfS and Universities UK specifically to discuss making progress on tackling harassment in higher education.

■ Young People: Carers

Henry Smith:

[\[18575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that young carers and their families are (a) identified and (b) adequately supported so that those young people can be helped to achieve at school.

Vicky Ford:

The government is committed to supporting young carers so that they are properly protected from excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities and are supported to achieve their full potential. Consistent identification remains challenging, with many being 'hidden' and therefore unrecognised and/or unsupported.

Changes through the Children and Families Act 2014 simplified the legislation relating to young adult carers' assessments, making rights and duties clearer to both young people and practitioners. This included promoting whole family approaches which triggers both and adult support services into action – assessing why a child is caring, what needs to change and what would help the family to prevent children or young people from taking on this responsibility in the first place.

The Department for Education also provides schools with £2.4 billion each year in additional funding through the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils. We expect schools to make effective use of their pupil premium budgets. Schools know their pupils best and will spend the grant accordingly to meet pupil needs, which includes where needs are based on a parent's health issues or disability.

We published the Children in Need Review conclusion in 2019. This sets out our approach to helping schools and children's social care improve the educational outcomes of children in need, including those young carers assessed as being in need of help and protection.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Migrant Workers

Sir Roger Gale:

[\[19730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) EU and (b) overseas nationals employed as (i) semi-skilled and (ii) unskilled workers in agriculture.

Victoria Prentis:

The information requested at this level of detail is not held by Defra. However, we can provide information taken from the ONS Annual Population Survey which shows the number of EU/EEA nationals working permanently in the agricultural sector for the whole of the UK. These figures will not include seasonal workers living in communal or temporary accommodation and do not show a distinction between semi-skilled and unskilled workers in agriculture.

The ONS Annual Population Survey showed that the number of EEA nationals working permanently in UK agriculture in 2019 was approximately 18,000.

Further ONS data suggests that meat processing (48%), fish processing (46%), fruit and veg processing (35%) and the manufacture of other food products (27%) had high proportions of non-UK EU nationals in their workforce in 2019.

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Sir Roger Gale: [19731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the value of top fruit left unpicked as a result of labour shortages during the 2018-2019 season.

Victoria Prentis:

The information requested is not held by Defra.

■ Air Pollution: Birmingham

Preet Kaur Gill: [18660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of PM2.5 emissions in Birmingham.

Rebecca Pow:

National statistics on emissions of air pollutants in the UK are published annually at the following URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/emissions-of-air-pollutants>.

An interactive map of emissions of PM2.5 and other pollutants is available to the public at a 1 km² resolution and is updated annually. The map for 2017 can be found at the following URL: <https://naei.beis.gov.uk/emissionsapp/>. It is possible to summarise the emissions map by local authority using the functions on the map webpage.

■ Animals: Transport

Dr Lisa Cameron: [19974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he has made an assessment of the potential merits of a common veterinary area to reduce the need for additional checks on animals at the border with the EU after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

At the end of 2020 the UK will leave the EU's customs area and the EU's single market. We will maintain our own Sanitary Phytosanitary (SPS) system so that we can set our own rules and standards. The UK has been clear that the UK-EU future relationship will be based on friendly relations and free trade, not on the EU's treaties or principles - there will be no regulatory alignment.

The UK and the EU may agree equivalence in certain areas to reduce practical barriers to trade at the border. However, this will only be done if the UK's regulatory autonomy is respected and there is no role for the ECJ.

■ Camping Sites

Bridget Phillipson:

[18769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of replicating the provisions of Scotland's wild camping laws in English law.

Rebecca Pow:

We are considering a range of options for promoting access to the countryside to meet the 'connecting people with nature' goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

There are no current plans or assessments underway to legislate for wild camping in England, including replicating Scottish camping laws.

■ Climate Change: Disadvantaged

Robert Halfon:

[18757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans take to help mitigate the effects of climate change on the most disadvantaged in society.

Rebecca Pow:

Adapting to inevitable changes in our climate is vital which is why the Government is taking robust action to improve resilience to the effects of climate change across the whole country and economy, as set out in our current National Adaptation Programme [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-second-national-adaptation-programme-2018-to-2023>].

The Government considers the distributional impact of our interventions on different groups, including disadvantaged groups. For instance, the formula for allocating the Government's flood defence funding is weighted towards protecting people's lives and homes. The most deprived areas of the country are eligible for higher payment levels than elsewhere, explicitly targeting higher Government investment in deprived areas.

Moving towards our net zero carbon emissions target offers the UK real opportunities such as new jobs, clean air and warm homes. It is vital we make sure that these opportunities are inclusive, benefitting people across the UK. HM Treasury will be conducting a review into the costs of decarbonisation, including how to achieve this transition in a way that works for households, businesses and public finances.

■ Clothing: Environment Protection

Alex Sobel:

[\[19016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the environmental damage caused by fast fashion.

Rebecca Pow:

In line with the Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2018), this Government is committed to taking forward the best mix of policy measures to reduce the environmental impacts of clothing.

We are working with WRAP and industry stakeholders through a voluntary agreement - the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan - to reduce the carbon, water and waste footprints of clothing by 2020. Discussions are now underway on a new phase for the agreement for the future.

We are also exploring options for extended producer responsibility for textiles and other priority waste streams. In addition, we are seeking powers in the Environment Bill that will enable us to introduce ecodesign and consumer information requirements, subject to consultation, to support durable, repairable, and recyclable textiles.

Our plans will be developed as part of a new Waste Prevention Programme which we plan to consult on later this year.

■ Coal: North West

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[20390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people who are reliant on coal for fuel in (a) Wallasey, (b) Merseyside and (c) the North West.

Rebecca Pow:

The impact assessment published alongside the Government response to the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood included an assessment of the number of people who use coal as a primary heat source across England. The impact assessment can be viewed at the following site: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/867428/burning-wood-consult-ia.pdf. The proposals included in the Government response outline our intention to rollout the policy in a phased approach, this is to ensure that those reliant on coal as a primary heat source have the time and support they need to transition to the cleanest alternative fuel type, whilst minimising any associated costs.

■ Crematoriums: Air Pollution

Grahame Morris: [\[18516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 14705 on Cremation, when the next process guidance review for crematoria will take place.

Rebecca Pow:

The Crematoria process guidance was last reviewed in 2012. In line with the Government ambition to review process guidance notes every 6-8 years it is due to be reviewed shortly.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Aviation

Layla Moran: [\[19056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many air miles were accumulated by (a) Ministers, (b) special advisers and (c) civil servants in his Department in (i) the last six months and (ii) each calendar year since 2015.

Victoria Prentis:

The Department has flown 1,203,364 miles in the last six months (based on the date flights were invoiced).

The table below shows the number of miles by calendar year since 2015 (based on the date the flights were invoiced).

YEAR	MILEAGE
2015	1,523,505
2016	1,239,659
2017	1,892,968
2018	3,312,017
2019	3,329,349
2020 (to date)	160,695

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: International Men's Day

Philip Davies: [\[18561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

Every year International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight how outcomes for men and boys can be improved and the important work going on every day to

address this. Defra group marked the day through a webinar available to all staff entitled "Why We Need International Men's Day". This shared key information and work underway to address these issues. Other webinars included topics such as "Being a 21st Century man", "Managing mental ill health from a male perspective" and "Raising boys". The day concluded with a panel Q and A session comprising senior managers, the webinar presenters and the lead of the Women's Network.

In addition to International Men's Day, in November Defra group celebrated Carers' Rights Day which also supports men with caring responsibilities. As part of the 'Movember' campaign we highlighted men's health issues, from cancer to suicide prevention, and the Cancer and Mental Health Networks encouraged employees to support this initiative. More widely across Defra group we promote other gender-based initiatives, such as marking International Women's Day in March.

On an ongoing basis, we continue to support flexible working and shared parental leave for all employees across Defra. This gives men as well as women the opportunity to manage their work-life balance and take time away from the workplace to be with their new children.

■ Dogs: Smuggling

Luke Pollard:

[\[19046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of dogs and puppies that were illegally imported in 2019; and from which countries those dogs and puppies were illegally imported.

Victoria Prentis:

The attached Annex contains the number of dogs landed in Great Britain which did not meet the import requirements and therefore required quarantine in 2019.

The definition of 'illegally landed' does not necessarily mean the animal was smuggled into Great Britain. Our definition of an illegal landing is any dog that is landed in Great Britain which does not meet the import requirements and therefore requires quarantine under the Rabies Importation Order. While these figures may include some smuggled animals, it also includes:

- pet animals that arrive at UK airports and during the pets check are found to be non-compliant
- animals that are found 'inland' and after a trading standards investigation are found to be non-compliant

The attached data will include animals imported under the Pet Travel Scheme and the commercial import (Balai) requirements.

■ Environment Agency: Staff

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[21298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many staff have been employed by the Environment Agency in each year since 2009.

Victoria Prentis:

The below table shows the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) in England only from 2009:

Year	A) DIRECTLY		B) CONTRACTED BASIS		Total
	Perm Employees	Fixed Term Contract Employees	Employment Agency Staff	Contractors	
09/10	10,918	359	429	452	12,158
10/11	10,063	105	209	135	10,512
11/12	9,816	158	516	139	10,628
12/13	10,345	310	487	216	11,358
13/14	10,068	207	218	114	10,608
14/15	9,624	113	343	154	10,235
15/16	9,556	117	275	391	10,340
16/17	9,839	264	185	607	10,896
17/18	9,174	316	233	283	10,006
18/19	9,577	296	297	260	10,429
January 2020	9,918	359	219	256	10,752

The changes in the number of staff who work at the Environment Agency represent the Spending Review settlements and income received from charge payers. The response uses England only figures as pre 2013 the Environment Agency was made up of England and Wales. Following 2013 it is England only. In addition, 896 Full Time Equivalents transferred to Defra Corporate Services under a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) arrangement in November 2017.

■ Farmers: Mental Illness

Carla Lockhart:

[\[20019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support farmers and fishermen suffering from mental health problems.

Victoria Prentis:

The mental health of all sections of the population, including farmers and fishermen, is one of this Government's top priorities. The Government is committed to transforming mental health services and has announced a further expansion in the

NHS Long Term Plan funded by an additional £2.3 billion a year in real terms by 2023/24. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are best placed to decide on how our investment in mental health services should be used locally to meet the needs of their populations living in rural and coastal areas. CCGs are responsible for ensuring adequate access to mental health services locally, including early interventions such as mental health first aid. Funding allocations to CCGs, including those covering rural areas, vary to meet the needs of local populations, including mental health need and the needs of remote or sparsely populated areas.

The Government takes the issue of farmers' wellbeing very seriously and is committed to supporting the wellbeing of farmers, incorporating wellbeing into future agricultural policy. We recognise this is a time of uncertainty and are designing our farming reforms in collaboration with those who work in agriculture wherever we can, considering personal and business resilience issue. We meet regularly with representatives from the main farming and rural charities. We have launched a £1 million grant funding project to provide resilience support to farmers and land managers in England to help them prepare for the Agricultural Transition period that will take place from 2021-2027. A range of providers will work directly with farmers providing business and personal resilience support and we will learn lessons from this project, using the accumulated evidence and on-going feedback from the industry to help us develop any next steps for any future initiatives and support.

On fisheries, Defra is providing support to SeafarersUK in a research project called 'The financial health and resilience of small-scale fishers, their families and communities'. Defra's grant will help SeafarersUK to widen the scope of the research on this important topic in order to understand better the type of financial problems fishers experience, their underlying reasons and what could be done to support fishers become more financially/economically resilient. This will include consideration of the high levels of poor mental health among fishing communities.

■ Fish Farming: Whitstable

Rosie Duffield:

[\[21293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Marine Management Organisation plans to publish the navigational risk assessment that it conducted on 22 January 2020 in relation to oyster farm activity in the Whitstable area.

Victoria Prentis:

The latest navigational risk assessment relating to oyster farm activity in the Whitstable area is currently being reviewed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The MMO do not routinely publish these reports and will consider publication in this instance once this review has been completed, and any necessary action as result of the findings of the report has been appropriately considered.

■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software

Luke Pollard: [\[18901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which Minister was responsible for presentation to the Assessment Panel and the service standard beta assessment report for the catch recording app for under 10m fishing boats in England.

Victoria Prentis:

In May 2019, the then Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP, approved the presentation to the assessment panel and the service standard beta assessment report for the catch recording app. The assessments were conducted in July 2019.

Luke Pollard: [\[18902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the report of the Record your catches beta assessment on 24 July 2019 was submitted to the Marine Management Organisation for checking prior to publication.

Victoria Prentis:

The report on the 'record your catch' beta assessment, dated 24 July 2019, was submitted to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) prior to publication. The user research undertaken as part of the assessment was conducted independently of the MMO. The independent assessment report published online in August 2019 does not reflect the views of Defra or the MMO.

Luke Pollard: [\[18905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there was a senior responsible owner in (a) the Marine Management Organisation or (b) his Department who oversaw the development of the catch recording app for under 10m fishing vessels in England.

Victoria Prentis:

Yes, there is a senior responsible owner within the Marine Management Organisation for the under 10 metre catch recording project.

■ Fishing Catches: Scotland and Wales

Luke Pollard: [\[18903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether under 10m fishing vessels registered in England and landing in a Welsh or Scottish port will be required to create a catch record and report before the catch is moved off the boat.

Victoria Prentis:

Under 10 metre fishing vessels registered to an English port, and licensed by the Marine Management Organisation, will be required to create and submit a catch record before the catch is moved off the boat, if landing species subject to quotas or catch limits into a Welsh or Scottish port. This is a condition of their fishing vessel licence. It is important for fishers to submit a catch record wherever they land to help

manage the risk to quota or catch limit fish stocks, to improve the level of data collected for these fish and to ensure future sustainability.

Luke Pollard: [\[18904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether under 10m fishing vessels registered in Wales or Scotland and landing in an English port will be required to create a catch record and report before the catch is moved off the boat.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries management is a devolved matter. Therefore the requirement to submit catch records for under 10 metre fishing vessels varies depending on where vessels are registered within the UK.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Stephanie Peacock: [\[21299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of flood defence funding has been allocated to (a) Yorkshire and Humber, (b) the South East, (c) London, (d) the North West, (e) the East of England, (f) the West Midlands, (g) the South West, (h) the East Midlands, (i) the North East and (j) England since 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

Between 2010/11 and 2018/19 the Government has invested over £3.3 billion to better protect the country from flooding. This includes over 1,200 flood defence schemes which have better protected over 400,000 homes. The Government has also invested over £1 billion to maintain flood defences

In addition to this, in September 2019 a further £62.35 million of Government spending was announced to protect communities across Yorkshire, Cumbria, the North East and South East of England from flooding. In total, more than 9,000 homes will be better protected against flooding through this round of funding.

ONS REGION	2010/2011 TO 2018/2019 GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT (£K)
<i>National or Cross-Boundary</i>	421,971
East Midlands	326,130
East of England	426,356
London	192,481
North East	130,100
North West	371,759
South East	547,220

ONS REGION	2010/2011 TO 2018/2019 GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT (£K)
South West	360,209
West Midlands	108,105
Yorkshire and the Humber	480,627
Total	3,364,957

■ Flood Control: Yorkshire and the Humber

Alex Sobel: [\[18973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to prevent flooding in Yorkshire.

Alex Sobel: [\[18974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much money has been allocated to flood defences in Yorkshire and the Humber for each year until 2025.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) is working in collaboration with partners to develop and deliver an ambitious, long-term capital programme to reduce flood risk across Yorkshire.

Within the current six-year investment period from 2015/16 – 2020/21, a total of £650 million is being invested across Yorkshire. This programme will better protect 67,000 properties from flooding and coastal erosion by the end of March 2021. In addition to conventionally engineered solutions, this programme includes a number of projects that utilise nature based solutions, providing carbon absorption and net gains alongside flood risk benefits. For example, there are three National Natural Flood Management (NFM) pilot projects in Calderdale, Leeds and Pickering.

Details of Government investment in flood defences after 2021 have not yet been announced. In addition to the above, up to £12.5 million is spent every year in Yorkshire maintaining existing flood defences. To help facilitate flood prevention short term and long term actions, the floods Minister Rebecca Pow MP is planning to meet South Yorkshire MPs in the near future in partnership with the EA and the Mayor of Sheffield City Region Combined Authority.

■ Floods: Planning Permission

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[20551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of planning applications were objected to by the Environment Agency because of flood risk concerns since 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

As a statutory consultee in development planning, the Environment Agency (EA) comments on all development proposals (other than minor development) in areas that are at (i) medium or high risk of flooding from rivers or the sea, (ii) within 20 metres of a Main River, (iii) within an area with critical drainage problems. The EA does not make the final decision on local planning approvals. Local planning authorities are responsible and accountable for approving proposals for new development in their local areas. In the majority of cases the EA's flood risk advice is taken on board by local planning authorities.

Between 2009 and 2018, the EA initially objected to approximately 30% of planning applications where it was a statutory consultee on flood risk matters. However, by working with the local planning authorities and developers to gather additional information, or make modifications to the initial development proposals, the vast majority of these objections were overcome.

The EA, in working with communities, developers and planning authorities, ensures that necessary development in flood risk areas is designed to be safe and resilient to flooding, and does not increase risk to others. The success of the EA's role is demonstrated in the reporting figures with over 99% of new homes in planning applications being made in line with our advice, and in 2018/19, over 95% of all planning applications (where flood risk was considered) were made in line with EA advice, where we were made aware of the planning decision.

YEAR	PLANNING DECISION IN LINE WITH EA ADVICE	PLANNING APPLICATIONS INVOLVING NEW HOMES DECIDED IN LINE WITH EA ADVICE ON FLOOD RISK
2018/19	95%	99%
2017/18	95%	99%
2016/17	96%	99%
2015/16	97%	99%
2014/15	96%	98%
2013/14	97%	99%
2012/13	95%	99%

YEAR	PLANNING DECISION IN LINE WITH EA ADVICE	PLANNING APPLICATIONS INVOLVING NEW HOMES DECIDED IN LINE WITH EA ADVICE ON FLOOD RISK
2011/12	96%	99%
2010/11	97%	No data
2009/10	96%	No data

The EA publishes a comprehensive list of all applications where we've lodged objections on flood risk grounds. This can be seen at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-objections-to-planning-on-the-basis-of-flood-risk>. Many of the issues will have been resolved before a final decision was made.

■ Food Supply

Alicia Kearns: [\[20000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that local British food producers have access to a fair, competitive and transparent supply chain after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

We want all food producers to get a fair price for their produce and are committed to tackling the unfairness that can exist in the agri-food supply chain.

Through the Government's Agriculture Bill, introduced on 12 September, we will launch a range of initiatives to improve the position of primary producers. We will introduce and enforce statutory codes of practice to address unfair trading practices which can occur between food producers and purchasers. We will also introduce measures to increase transparency throughout the agri-food supply chain, using strengthened powers to collect and share data.

Alicia Kearns: [\[20614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to assist (a) farmers and (b) food producers to process their food in environmentally sustainable and cost-effective ways.

Victoria Prentis:

Using powers in the Agriculture Bill we will provide grants to farmers, foresters and growers so that they can invest in equipment, technology, and infrastructure that will help their businesses to prosper while improving their productivity and enhancing the environment. The grants will help producers to focus on more efficient production methods that will reduce costs, improve yields and give them a better return. We will

also support farmers who want to process and add value to their products, create new products, or sell their produce directly to customers.

■ Food: Production

Alicia Kearns: [\[21284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timetable is for publishing a new geographical indications scheme for food producers.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK Government's new geographical indications (GI) schemes will enter into force at the end of the transition period at 11pm on 31 December 2020. The schemes will welcome applications from applicants from then. They will provide automatic protection for all existing UK GIs (and any new UK GIs registered in the EU on or prior to 31 December 2020).

The new domestic logos (and detailed guidance on usage requirements and best practice) will be made available to GI producers and retailers prior to the end of the transition period. Use of the EU logos will no longer be required on products from 1 January 2021. Producers will still be able to use the EU GI logos on products (both when on sale in the UK and the EU) should they wish to do so.

Detailed guidance on the UK Government's new GI schemes will be made available to GI producers and retailers prior to the end of the transition period. Until 31 December 2020, EU rules on GIs will continue to apply in the UK.

■ Horses: Animal Welfare

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[19973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of equines moving between the UK and the EU in a future trade deal with the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

The Secretary of State meets regularly with his Cabinet colleagues to discuss a range of topics, including the future trade deal with the EU. As the PM has made clear in his speech of 3 February, animal welfare is a priority for the UK in trade negotiations. The UK is proud of its world-leading food, health and animal welfare standards. We will not lower our standards as we negotiate the new trade deal.

■ Horticulture: Migrant Workers

Sir Roger Gale: [\[19732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) EU and (b) overseas nationals employed as (i) semi-skilled and (ii) unskilled workers in horticulture.

Sir Roger Gale:

[\[19733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the additional costs incurred by the (a) agricultural and (b) horticultural sectors as a result of the proposed immigration controls on (i) semi-skilled and (ii) unskilled workers.

Victoria Prentis:

The information requested at this level of detail on employment numbers is not held by Defra. Defra is considering the latest data and working closely with industry to understand labour demand and supply, including both permanent and seasonal workforce requirements.

The information requested on estimates of additional costs incurred as a result of the new points-based immigration system is not held by Defra.

■ Marine Environment: International Cooperation

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to expand the global membership of the Global Ocean Alliance.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to meet the Government's target of protecting 30 per cent of world oceans by 2030.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[18655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of the world's oceans that are in marine protected areas.

Rebecca Pow:

Joining the Global Ocean Alliance indicates that countries will support a new global target of protecting at least 30% of the global ocean within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2030 at the Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of Parties (COP15) in Kunming, China in October 2020 (30by30). This target would replace the current 10% target agreed in Aichi in 2010.

The UK-led Global Ocean Alliance is currently made up of Belgium, Belize, Costa Rica, Finland, Gabon, Kenya, Nigeria, Palau, Portugal, Seychelles, Sweden and Vanuatu. Many other countries have also expressed their support for the 30by30 target.

English waters have 177 MPAs covering 40% of English seas. The UK has 357 MPAs protecting 25% of UK waters spanning almost 220,000 km². Furthermore, the Overseas Territories Blue Belt Programme is on track to deliver 4 million km² marine protection around the UK Overseas Territories by 2020.

Globally, the World Database on MPAs, a joint project of the UN Environment Programme and the International Union for Nature Conservation, shows the percentage of the ocean covered by protected areas at 7.91%.

To increase the proportion of the global ocean that is in MPAs, the Government is working with supportive countries and NGOs to encourage other countries to join the Global Ocean Alliance and thereby increase the possibility that the 30by30 target will be adopted later this year in Kunming.

■ Nitrogen Dioxide: Birmingham

Preet Kaur Gill: [18661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of trends in NO₂ emissions in Birmingham.

Rebecca Pow:

National statistics on emissions of air pollutants and trends in the UK, including nitrogen oxides, are published annually at the following URL:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/emissions-of-air-pollutants>.

■ Peat

Kerry McCarthy: [18518]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the England peat strategy will be published.

Rebecca Pow:

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government committed to publishing an England Peat Strategy to create and deliver a new ambitious framework for peat restoration in England. We intend to publish it in due course. That strategy will set out a holistic plan for the management, protection and restoration of our upland and lowland peatlands so that they deliver benefits for climate and nature. We are considering the Committee on Climate Change's recommendations in drawing up the strategy.

We are currently allocating £10 million in 2018-21 for approximately 5,948 hectares of peatland restoration; our manifesto committed to increase that as part of the new £640 million Nature for Climate Fund. We will set out more details of funding allocated specifically to peat restoration in due course.

■ Peat Bogs: Conservation

Kerry McCarthy: [18519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to implement the Committee on Climate Change's recommendation of ending the burning of peatland in 2020.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[18520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding his Department plans to provide for peatland restoration in the next five years.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[18521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ban the extraction of peat as recommended by the Committee on Climate Change.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[18522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is developing targets for the protection and restoration of upland and lowland peat.

Rebecca Pow:

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government committed to publishing an England Peat Strategy to create and deliver a new ambitious framework for peat restoration in England. We intend to publish it in due course. That strategy will set out a holistic plan for the management, protection and restoration of our upland and lowland peatlands so that they deliver benefits for climate and nature. We are considering the Committee on Climate Change's recommendations in drawing up the strategy.

We are currently allocating £10 million in 2018-21 for approximately 5,948 hectares of peatland restoration; our manifesto committed to increase that as part of the new £640 million Nature for Climate Fund. We will set out more details of funding allocated specifically to peat restoration in due course.

■ Recycling

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[18530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support local authorities increase their recycling rates.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to increasing both the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling and making recycling easier for everyone. The Environment Bill, which has been introduced in Parliament, introduces legislation so that from 2023, all collectors of waste must collect a core set of materials from households, businesses and other organisations such as schools. The core set will be plastic, glass, metal, paper and card, food and garden waste. By collecting the same core set of materials there will be less confusion among householders and others about what they can put in their recycling bins. As a result, the amount of materials that local authorities collect for recycling will increase.

We want to work closely with local authorities to help them improve their recycling performance. We will therefore provide guidance and examples of good practice. We also work with them on developing a framework of non-binding performance

indicators to help identify which local authorities require extra support to improve their recycling performance.

■ Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus

Jim Shannon:

[19872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent tomato brown rugose fruit virus spreading to the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

Tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV) is a virus which infects tomato and pepper crops. It was first described infecting tomato crops in Israel in 2014, but subsequently it has spread to other tomato growing regions around the world. ToBRFV is readily spread from plants to plants by handling of plants and tools used in crop management and is also seed transmissible. The virus has also been shown to be transmitted by bumblebees during pollination. The ToBRFV virus is harmless to humans and animals but can cause serious damage to crops.

In November 2019 EU emergency legislation was introduced to prevent the spread of ToBRFV, which applies in the UK during the transition period. The UK was instrumental in ensuring that the introduction of this legislation was prioritised and based on the most up to date technical evidence. This legislation requires that plants, including seed, of tomatoes and peppers being imported or moved meets prescribed requirements to confirm they are free from the virus.

In the UK there has been an extensive programme of testing of tomato and pepper seed which had been moved into the UK prior to the introduction of the EU legislation. Where infected stocks have been identified these have been destroyed. Surveillance of growing crops will be carried out by the Animal and Plant Health Agency throughout this growing season and plans to manage outbreaks are in place should infected crops be identified.

Defra and Fera Science Ltd are working closely with the industry to raise awareness of ToBRFV and to encourage good practice in the industry to minimise the risk.

Industry initiatives are supporting these official activities, including research funded by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.

■ Tree Felling: Dorset

Sir Christopher Chope:

[21143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many trees were felled in Dorset in response to instructions from Natural England that the felling was necessary to maintain heathland in the latest year for which figures are available; and how many trees are to be felled in 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

A number of habitat restoration schemes were undertaken in Dorset associated with the restoration of lowland heathlands SSSI. Heathland is a nationally scarce habitat supporting rare species and, uniquely to Dorset, all our native reptile species. The

restoration works have included some felling of trees, predominately commercially planted pine.

The Forestry Commission advises that in Dorset around 50.7ha of woodland has been felled for heathland restoration since January 2019, based on areas given permission through felling licences. This is not easily translatable to numbers of trees and the Forestry Commission does not have sight of future activity.

The works are part of agreed management undertaken by SSSI owners. Natural England supports the actions undertaken by SSSI owners to restore these sites in line with the Government's 25 year Environment Plan.

■ Tree Planting: Hartlepool

Mike Hill:

[\[18987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many trees are planned to be planted in Hartlepool constituency in 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

To drive an unprecedented step-change in planting rates and help reach our net zero target we will invest in tree planting with a new Nature for Climate Fund (NCF). A significant proportion of the NCF will help support our commitment to plant 30,000 hectares of trees per year across the UK by 2025.

The Government's support for woodland creation is predominantly through grant schemes and incentives, these include the recently launched Woodland Carbon Guarantee, in addition to the existing Countryside Stewardship, Woodland Carbon Fund, Woodland Creation Planning Grant and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund. These grants are available to local authorities, land managers and community led organisations wherever they are in the country. We do not have individual targets by constituency. We are working to increase the uptake of grant schemes and strongly encourage eligible organisations to do so.

The Government is consulting on ways to further incentivise land managers and owners to plant more trees. Later this year we will consult on a Tree Strategy for England, designed to set the Government's future vision for the sector.

■ Wildlife: Cybercrime

Jo Stevens:

[\[20516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of trends in cyber-enabled wildlife crime since 2015.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government part-funds the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). The NWCU publishes annual tactical assessments, which outline their analysis of current, emerging and future wildlife crime threats, including cyber-enabled wildlife crime.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Albania: Press Freedom

Emily Thornberry: [\[18602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of legislative proposals on anti-defamation in Albania on the freedom of the press in that country.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is concerned by the media law package proposed by the Albanian Government which, if enacted, allows the authorities to impose immediate fines and remove contested content without a court order. We are aware that the package has been submitted for consideration to the Venice Commission and we await its conclusion.

The British Government is committed to promoting media freedom internationally, highlighted by the Media Freedom Campaign launched in November 2018 to shine a spotlight on media freedom and increase the cost to those abusing media freedom and persecuting journalists.

■ Brazil: Freedom of Expression

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[18995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he is making to his Brazilian counterpart on (a) freedom of expression and (b) freedom of the press in that country.

Wendy Morton:

The British Government is fully committed to promoting freedom of expression and freedom of the press. We believe that media freedom is vital for healthy societies everywhere and that journalists ought to be able to investigate and report without undue interference. The UK and Brazil have a close dialogue on a number of bilateral and global issues of mutual interest, including on freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

■ Brazil: Indigenous Peoples

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[18992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the increased issuance of mining licences in Brazil on Brazil's indigenous people.

Wendy Morton:

We are monitoring the situation. We regularly discuss issues affecting indigenous peoples with Brazilian authorities, and will continue to do so. The UK is committed to promoting and defending the human rights of indigenous communities in Brazil.

■ Brazil: Prisons

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[18994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Brazilian counterpart on the (a) overcrowding of, (b) understaffing at and (c) lack of resources available to prisoners in prison facilities in that country.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of significant concerns about prison conditions in Brazil. We have raised our concerns with the Brazilian authorities and will continue to do so.

■ Cuba: Overseas Trade

Gareth Thomas: [\[18501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many meetings the British Ambassador to Cuba has had with the Cuban Government on non-payment by Cuban authorities for work undertaken by (a) UK and (b) European businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

Our Ambassador to Cuba has raised the issue of non-payment of debts to British and European businesses in various meetings with Cuban Government ministers and officials on numerous occasions, and we continue to press Cuban authorities to repay all outstanding debts.

■ Diplomatic Service: Driving under Influence

Emily Thornberry: [\[20423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the written ministerial statement of 25 February 2020, HCWS119, on Alleged Serious and Significant Offences (Diplomatic Immunity) 2018, on what dates the (a) incidents of driving under the influence of alcohol took place and (b) diplomat responsible for those incidents was expelled from the UK.

Wendy Morton:

The two diplomats involved were expelled from the diplomatic mission shortly after the incidents took place.

■ Foreign Policy

Emily Thornberry: [\[21181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to coordinate with the EU on foreign policy after the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

After the Transition Period, we will engage the EU as we would any other partner: as sovereign co-equals. Foreign policy will be for the British Government to determine,

but we will continue to work closely with the EU and its Member States on a wide range of issues. We will continue to tackle shared threats together within a broader framework of friendly dialogue and cooperation.

■ Leah Sharibu

Fiona Bruce: [\[20450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Nigerian counterpart on the abduction and imprisonment of Leah Sharibu by Boko Haram; and what response he has received to those representations.

James Duddridge:

The UK has repeatedly called for the release of all those abducted by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA), including Leah Sharibu. 19th February marked the second anniversary of her abduction. At the time of the Dapchi abductions, the then Foreign Secretary spoke to the Nigerian Vice President to offer UK assistance in the search for the schoolchildren, but none was requested. We continue to use our public messaging and extensive engagement with the Government of Nigeria to push for urgent action to secure the release of all abductees.

■ Marine Environment: Treaties

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the Global Ocean Treaty.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 26 February 2020]: I refer the Hon Member to the answer to question 14806.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to attend the UN negotiations on the Global Ocean Treaty in New York in March 2020.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 26 February 2020]: I refer the Hon Member to the answer to question 14806.

Afzal Khan: [\[18962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he will attend the UN discussions on a global ocean treaty in New York in June 2020.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 26 February 2020]: I refer the Hon Member to the answer to question 14806.

■ Nigeria: Politics and Government

Fiona Bruce:

[20449]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken to provide support to his Nigerian counterpart to tackle the security situation in Nigeria; and whether that support has been (a) accepted or (b) rejected.

James Duddridge:

The UK remains committed to working with the Government of Nigeria to help tackle insecurity and address the underlying causes of the instability. This includes supporting Nigeria and its neighbours in the fight against Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa. We currently provide a comprehensive package of support to Nigeria, which includes humanitarian and development support, to help tackle this threat. The UK also conducts training and capacity building, including on Human Rights compliance, for Nigerian armed forces deploying to the North East. We regularly express our concern about the increasing levels of violence with the Nigerian Government. Most recently the Prime Minister raised this with President Buhari during the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January, and the President expressed his gratitude for UK support.

■ Russia: Human Rights

Emily Thornberry:

[18589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of violence against human rights protesters in Russia.

Wendy Morton:

We remain deeply concerned about the levels of violence against human rights protestors in Russia. Political and human rights activists are facing increasing constraints and the UK has publicly called on the Russian Government to comply with all its international commitments on human rights, including those in the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The fundamental rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are enshrined in the Russian constitution. Russia has also signed up to a number of international commitments in these areas in both the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Emily Thornberry:

[18590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Russian counterpart on violence against human rights protesters in Russia.

Wendy Morton:

We remain deeply concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation and increasing constraints on political freedoms in Russia. We continue to monitor the

situation and will continue to make our concerns clear in multilateral forums and bilateral interactions at all levels.

■ Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[18996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Brazilian counterpart on the exports of cluster munitions to Saudi Arabia by that country.

Wendy Morton:

The UK signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) in 2008 and acts in full accordance with its obligations. As part of this, the UK regularly uses its interventions at the Convention's meetings to call on all States not party to the Convention to accede without delay. The UK and Brazil have a close dialogue on a range of global issues of mutual interest. The UK has raised the importance of Brazil's accession to the CCM with Brazilian authorities and funded projects in Brazil to strengthen the public debate around this issue.

■ Sports: Falkland Islands

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if his Department will take steps to (a) support sports teams from the Falkland Islands to participate in international tournaments and (b) tackle intimidation of such teams.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government fully supports the right of the Falkland Islanders to compete in international sports tournaments under their own flag. Officials in our missions overseas stand ready to support any Overseas Territories teams competing in international tournaments who find themselves under threat or intimidation. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials in Stanley and Brasilia were in close contact with the Falklands Team throughout the Pan American Team Continental Championships to offer support.

■ Trade: British Overseas Territories

Scott Benton: [\[19033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to increase trade links between the UK and British Overseas Territories.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's Overseas Territories (OTs) have preferential access to the UK market, which means that they are able to export goods to the UK tariff and quota free. The British Government has ensured that this access will continue at the end of the transition period. The UK has established trade links with some OTs, and stands ready to support UK and OT businesses that want to strengthen their trade links.

■ Turkey: Rape

Paul Blomfield:

[\[18740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on reports of that country bringing forward legislative proposals that would grant an amnesty to rapists that married their victim.

Wendy Morton:

The reporting of the proposed bill is deeply concerning. We strongly support the rights of women in Turkey and encourage the Turkish authorities to safeguard their welfare and respect their human rights and have raised our concerns over child marriage with the Turkish authorities. Our Embassy in Ankara provides project support to a number of Turkish civil society organisations working in the area of fundamental freedoms. Currently in the financial year 2019/20 we are funding a range of projects including women's and minority rights. We will continue to monitor the situation in Turkey and to encourage the government to protect fundamental rights.

■ Ukraine: Military Aid

Emily Thornberry:

[\[18591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department received reports of the US Administration freezing military aid to Ukraine prior to 12 September 2019.

Wendy Morton:

Reports of a freeze on military aid to Ukraine were in the public domain prior to 12 September 2019. The transfer of military aid between the US and Ukraine is a bilateral matter between the two countries.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[18592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department made representations to the US Administration on the freezing of military aid to Ukraine before 12 September 2019.

Wendy Morton:

The transfer of military aid between the US and Ukraine is a bilateral matter between the two countries.

■ Wagner Group

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[20443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on Russian state support for the Wagner Group.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of media reports alleging Russian state links to the Wagner Group, and maintain an interest in this matter.

■ Wagner Group: Sanctions

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[18643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of sanctions against PMC Wagner, its founder Dmitry Utkin, and businessman Yevgeniy Prigozhin.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is concerned about the reporting of Russia's alleged use of mercenaries and other proxy actors globally, and we continue to look into and consider this activity. There are currently no EU or UK sanctions on these individuals or entities. During the Transition Period, EU sanctions will continue to apply in the UK and we will look to carry over existing EU Russia sanctions, at the end of this period.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion: Tarsal Coalition

Fiona Bruce: [\[20447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 14720, on Abortion: Tarsal Coalition, in what format her Department collects data on abortions as a result of a diagnosis of tarsal coalition; and if she will place a copy of that data in the Library.

Fiona Bruce: [\[20448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 14719, on Abortion: Club Foot, in what format her Department collects data on abortions as a result of a diagnosis of club foot; and if she will place a copy of that data in the Library.

Helen Whately:

Data on the number of abortions as result of a diagnosis of tarsal coalition or club foot for the years 2009 to 2018 is not held in the format requested, and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. ICD-10 code 66.8 'Other Congenital deformities of feet' is used to code incidences of tarsal coalition or club foot and other deformities of feet listed on the HSA4 forms for the purposes of providing usable data for monitoring and analysis. However, individual conditions could be identified by visually checking the underlying ANS forms to see whether the terms 'Tarsal Coalition' or 'Club Foot' are listed on the form. HSA4 forms are available from 2013 to 2018 but extraction of this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates: Regulation

Munira Wilson: [\[18911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department plans to provide to the General Medical Council to conduct the preparatory work for

bringing forward the statutory regulation of physician associates and anaesthesia associates.

Munira Wilson: [18913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether physician associates and anaesthesia associates will have prescribing rights under the Government's plans to regulate those professions.

Munira Wilson: [18915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals for the regulation of physician associates and anaesthesia associates.

Helen Whately:

On 18 July 2019 the Department announced that it would be asking the General Medical Council (GMC) to take forward the regulation of physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs).

Funding has been agreed with the GMC to carry out development work and we are working with the GMC and stakeholders to develop legislation to bring PAs and AAs into regulation.

We intend to consult on draft legislation later this year.

Extending prescribing responsibilities to a profession involves a separate legislative process to the introduction of statutory regulation and requires amendments to the Human Medicines Regulations. The process is jointly led by NHS England and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. Once PAs and AAs have been brought into regulation, we will work with NHS England to consider allowing PAs and AAs to prescribe medicines where appropriate.

■ Asthma: Health Education

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [18724]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make it its policy to raise public awareness of the links between asthma and cleaning products.

Helen Whately:

The NHS Long Term Plan identifies respiratory disease as a clinical priority and highlights key areas for action. This includes enabling more people to self-manage their condition through introducing standardised education programmes for asthma. To deliver this, a national respiratory programme has been established. The programme has expert representation from across the National Health Service and is working in collaboration with representatives from public health.

The NHS A-Z lists common triggers for asthma and points to specific advice on this issue on the Asthma UK website at the following links:

<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/indoor-environment/>

■ Breastfeeding

Kirsty Blackman: [\[18837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle (a) regional and (b) national differences in breastfeeding rates; and what discussions he has had with representatives from the devolved Administrations on a strategy to improve preterm nutrition.

Kirsty Blackman: [\[18838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the benefits of a human milk-based diet for the development of preterm infants.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Washington and Sunderland West (Sharon Hodgson MP) on 10 February 2020 to Question [10737](#).

My Rt. hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has not had any recent discussions with representatives from the devolved administrations on a strategy to improve preterm nutrition.

A human milk-based diet is important to a baby at any age and provides the best start in life.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[18533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the performance threshold for the faster diagnosis standard for cancer is.

Jo Churchill:

In recognition that current standards measure time to be seen by a doctor rather than the time to being provided a diagnosis of cancer, in 2015 the Independent Cancer Taskforce recommended the introduction of a new standard, to ensure that people receive a life changing confirmation of whether or not they have cancer within 28 days.

The 28 day Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) has been tested as part of the wider clinical review of access standards (CRS) and no performance threshold has yet been set.

The NHS Standard Contract consultation, which closed at the end of January, set an initial expectation that the threshold will be set between 70-85%, and outlined NHS England and NHS Improvement's intention to increase the performance threshold over time as appropriate. The threshold for the FDS will be included in the finalised standard contract for 2020/21.

Existing standards remain in place until any new standards are agreed. The CRS review is due to report its recommendations in spring 2020.

■ Cancer: Drugs

Bambos Charalambous: [\[18956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's position is on whether patients who initially privately fund a cancer drug can receive it on the NHS if it is subsequently (a) approved for use by NICE, (b) added to NHS England's National Cancer Drugs Fund List and (c) if they meet the criteria for the drugs' use.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement has advised that, following a drug becoming routinely available from the National Health Service, it would expect all eligible patients to be able to access that drug from the NHS.

This principle would also apply for treatments under the Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF). A patient previously treated privately would be able to transfer to NHS care and continue treatment available via the CDF, as long as they meet all of the treatment criteria.

For those patients who have previously received all of their care in the private sector and then transfer to NHS care, NHS England and NHS Improvement has advised that it cannot reimburse for treatments given in the private sector or funded privately prior to the treatment becoming routinely available from the NHS.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Bambos Charalambous: [\[18997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the publication of the Health Education England Cancer Work Force Plan phase 2.

Bambos Charalambous: [\[18999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions (a) he and (b) his officials have had with (a) health professionals, (b) charities and (c) patient organisations on the Health Education England Cancer Workforce Plan phase 2.

Bambos Charalambous: [\[19000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how work previously undertaken by Health Education England on the Cancer Workforce Plan phase 2 will be taken account of in the final People Plan.

Jo Churchill:

Health Education England (HEE) published phase one of the Cancer Workforce Plan in December 2017, which commits to the expansion of capacity and skills across priority professions within the cancer workforce to 2021.

HEE began work on phase two in early 2018. The work on phase two of the plan was submitted by HEE to NHS England to inform the development of the cancer ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan in July 2018. NHS England established a Cancer Workforce Task and Finish Group in 2019 (including representatives of HEE, the National Health Service, Cancer Research UK (CRUK), Macmillan and Cancer

52). The final NHS People Plan, due to be published in early 2020, will also build upon the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan, including taking targeted action to ensure the supply of NHS staff who play a vital role in increasing early diagnosis of cancer.

Ministers and officials regularly meet, both formally and informally, with a wide range of health professionals, patients and charities linked to supporting cancer including CRUK and Macmillan Cancer Support. In October last year Departmental Ministers hosted a cancer workforce roundtable with 25 charities (including patient organisations) and representatives of NHS England and HEE.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[18741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a cancer care fund to provide early access for people to cancer treatment not funded on the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

To improve cancer care, the NHS Long Term Plan sets out how we will speed up the path from innovation to business-as-usual, spreading proven new techniques and technologies and reducing variation. Faster, smarter and effective radiotherapy, supported by greater networking of specialised expertise, will mean more patients are offered curative treatment, with fewer side effects and shorter treatment times.

Since October 2010, the Cancer Drugs Fund has enabled over 120,000 approvals for treating people in England with life-extending cancer drugs that would not otherwise have been available to them. This year £340 million has been invested in the Fund and we have spent more than £1.9 billion helping people with cancer get the treatments they need.

By 2021, where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer will have access to personalised care, including needs assessment, a care plan and health and wellbeing information and support. This will be delivered in line with the NHS Comprehensive Model for Personalised Care. This will empower people to manage their care and the impact of their cancer and maximise the potential of digital and community-based support. 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.

NHS England has committed funding of over £1.3 billion over the next five years to deliver the commitments on cancer in the Long Term Plan.

■ Cancer: Mental Health Services

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[20639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Cancer Alliance Planning Guidance for 2019-20, which cancer alliances have committed to improving access to psychological care for all types of cancer.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[20640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department are taking to ensure that cancer alliances improve access to psychological care for cancer patients.

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[20642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people living with cancer can access psychological support.

Jo Churchill:

Over the next five years, Cancer Alliances will be embedding personalised care interventions, which will identify and address the changing needs of cancer patients from diagnosis onwards, including psychological needs. People with long term conditions, such as cancer, have been identified as priority patients for accessing Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. These services are being integrated with physical health services, to better align psychological therapies for mental illness within primary and secondary care pathways.

■ Cancer: Sutton Coldfield

Mr Andrew Mitchell: [\[18444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce waiting times for NHS hospital appointments for cancer patients in Sutton Coldfield constituency.

Jo Churchill:

There is an ongoing improvement programme focussing on the main cancer waiting time standards and pathways across Birmingham and Solihull. This, along with a number of initiatives funded by the West Midlands Cancer Alliance and transformation funding, aims to improve waiting times and patient experience and includes:

- introduction of the Faecal Immunochemical Test for bowel cancer screening; and
- implementation of a vague symptom pathway through a Rapid Diagnostic Centre.

Weekly oversight and assurance meetings are led by the Chief Operating Officer of University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust with all specialities attending. NHS Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group continues to meet with the Trust each month to explore all avenues, including developing a trajectory for improving performance and waiting times.

■ Cannabidiol: Side Effects

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his Department's policy to undertake further research on the side effects of cannabidiol products.

Helen Whately:

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including on cannabidiol products; it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. The NIHR has identified research on cannabis-based medicinal products as a priority and has issued two calls for research proposals on this area.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Colum Eastwood: [\[21317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of medical cannabis through the NHS in Northern Ireland.

Jo Churchill:

Policy on the availability of medicines, including medicinal cannabis, funded by the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland is a devolved matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly.

■ Care Homes: Dementia

Caroline Lucas: [\[18517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people selling their homes to pay for their dementia care.

Helen Whately:

Data on the number of people selling their homes to pay for dementia care is not collected centrally.

Deferred Payment Agreements (DPAs) are available to allow eligible individuals to access the equity in their home to pay for their care, without having to sell it. This provides individuals and their families time to make important decisions about their care and finances.

DPAs were introduced through the Care Act 2014 as part of the wider reforms of social care provided for in that Act.

The Government is committed to ensuring that people should not be forced to sell their home to pay for their care.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

Bridget Phillipson:

[18784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report of the Independent Review of Adult Screening Programmes in England, published by Sir Mike Richards in October 2019, what plans he has to develop the IT system supporting the cervical screening programme with the functionality recommended in that report.

Jo Churchill:

Professor Sir Mike Richards' Review on Adult Screening included a recommendation to develop screening IT systems that focus on the functionality needed to support improvements in the uptake and coverage of screening programmes, including the NHS Cervical Screening and Breast Screening Programmes.

NHSX is taking forward a comprehensive Digital Transformation of Screening programme. As part of this, NHSX is developing an interim cervical screening call/recall system, to end the current reliance on National Health Application and Infrastructure Services (NHAIS). A team has been established to deliver the new system and to migrate data from NHAIS and a technical architecture has been approved. A roadmap for the build and implementation of the new system and a plan with an estimated go-live date are being developed.

■ Coronavirus

Jonathan Ashworth:

[1253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance has been issued to community health NHS trusts on the treatment of suspected Covid-19 patients at home.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has published guidance for primary and secondary care professionals that outlines infection prevention and control advice for healthcare providers assessing, testing and caring for possible cases of COVID-2019. This guidance should be used in conjunction with local policies and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>

Additional guidance for primary care professionals can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care>

Currently, all suspected cases are assessed by NHS 111 and if COVID-19 is considered a possibility then they are advised to self-isolate and the testing arrangements are clarified. The history and test result are then used by clinicians and local health protection teams to determine next steps. Some community health National Health Service trusts may be involved in the testing of suspected cases and they will be working to an agreed local protocol.

■ Dementia: Research

Siobhain McDonagh: [\[1853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential merits of using dementia research funding to investigate best practice in dementia care.

Helen Whately:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is funded through the Department to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.

Sharing best practice is key to this mission, with applications judged against a number of factors including the ability of the funder to involve patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including dementia care.

■ Dental Services: Ealing

James Murray: [\[19008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the Starting Well programme on improving children's dental attendance in the Borough of Ealing.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to improving access to dental services and improving the oral health of children. NHS England is responsible for commissioning dental services to meet the needs of the local population.

The Starting Well Programme is due to end on 31 March 2020. A final evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the scheme.

■ Dental Services: Home Care Services

James Murray: [\[19009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of domiciliary for dental care in (a) Ealing North constituency and (b) England.

James Murray: [\[19010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase access to domiciliary dental care for older people in (a) Ealing North constituency and (b) England.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England is responsible for commissioning primary care dental services, including domiciliary care. Domiciliary care may be delivered by any dentist holding a contract to deliver general dental services or it may be specifically commissioned by NHS England locally as an additional service. NHS England is working very closely

with stakeholders, inclusive of the Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch, to ensure that patients receive the appropriate care within the appropriate setting.

Where such services have been specifically commissioned any concerns about delivery should be raised with NHS England. NHS England has a duty to provide services to meet local need, including domiciliary services so any perceived gaps in service should also be raised with NHS England.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Impact Assessments

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[20426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to review how it carries out impact assessments of new policies to identify the risks as well as the resources and time required.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department's Impact Assessment process seeks to identify risks and uncertainties associated with proposed policy changes, following best practice guidance for impact assessments and quality assurance set out by HM Treasury in the Green Book and Aqua Book.

Impact assessment procedures have been strengthened by introducing an internal Senior Review Committee who review and quality assure all impact assessments.

Risk and resource implications are a focus throughout the process and are explicitly set out when the Department publishes impact assessments.

■ Diabetes: Medical Equipment

Damien Moore:

[\[18916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on securing the adequate availability and delivery of freestyle librelink diabetic sensors during the transition period.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is aware that there has been a temporary disruption in the supply of Freestyle Libre glucose monitoring sensors, caused by an increase in demand. The supplier, Abbott, has however recently informed us that the delay issues have now been fully resolved and that this news has been communicated to existing users and health care professionals.

Abbott have emphasised that the supply disruption was not caused by the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. The UK has now left the EU and entered a transition period, which will run until 31 December 2020. EU regulations on medicines, vaccines and medical devices will continue to apply to the UK throughout the transition period, during which we will negotiate a new trade agreement with the EU.

■ Doctors and Nurses: Bedfordshire

Richard Fuller: [\[18510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of full-time equivalent (a) general practitioners, (b) other doctors and (c) nurses employed by the NHS in Bedfordshire in (a) 2010 and (b) the most recent year for which figures are available.

Helen Whately:

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

The following table shows the full time equivalent (FTE) number of doctors, and nurses and health visitors employed in the Bedfordshire area as at October 2019, the latest available data, compared to October 2010.

	OCTOBER 2010	OCTOBER 2019	CHANGE	% CHANGE
Doctors	303	360	57	19
Nurses and health visitors	905	698	207	23

The Bedfordshire area is defined as those working at Bedford Hospital NHS Trust or NHS Bedfordshire CCG in 2019, and at Bedford Hospital NHS Trust or Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust in 2010.

The following table shows the number of GPs and nurses employed in the area covered by NHS Bedfordshire CCG as at September 2019 compared to September 2015, FTE.

		ALL REGULAR GPs (EXCLUDES LOCUMS)	ALL NURSES	
-	-			
	NHS Bedfordshire CCG	September 2019	245	138
September 2015	227	133		

■ Energy Drinks: Children

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[18528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to restrict the sale of energy drinks to people aged under 16.

Jo Churchill:

The Government confirmed it will end the sale of energy drinks to children under the age of 16 in chapter three of the childhood obesity plan, published in July 2019 as part of 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s'. We will be setting out the full policy in our consultation response as soon as possible.

■ Flour: Folic Acid

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[18529]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on the consultation on the fortification of flour.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newport East (Jessica Morden MP) on 4 February 2020 to Question [10331](#).

■ Food: Hygiene

Jim McMahon:

[20592]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on the mandatory display of food hygiene ratings in England.

Jo Churchill:

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is operated by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in partnership with local authorities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Food businesses covered by the scheme are provided with stickers showing their rating. Those in Wales and Northern Ireland are already required by law to display the stickers at their premises, while those in England are encouraged to do so.

The FSA has put together an evidence-based case for the necessary legislation to mandate display which is expected to be submitted for ministerial consideration in the near future.

■ General Practitioners

Dr Julian Lewis:

[19720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of (a) the extent of and (b) the potential effect on (i) the health outcomes of patients and (ii) the average waiting time for an appointment of the requirement by GPs that one ailment is discussed at each surgery visit; whether he has plans to ban this practice; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

General practitioner (GP) practices are contracted by the National Health Service to provide essential services as are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of their patients. Those contracts do not specify how GP practices organise their appointment systems or how long each appointment should be as ultimately that will be a

professional judgement for GPs on how best they can meet the reasonable needs of their patients, safely and effectively.

Patients are generally advised to plan ahead for their appointments to make sure they cover everything they may want to discuss. Writing a list of problems, starting with the most important is commonly advised and patients with complicated or multiple problems may need to ask for a longer appointment when they book.

■ General Practitioners: Standards

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[20365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on average waiting times for patients seeking GP surgery appointments caused by (a) changes to GP contracts and (b) other (i) administrative and (ii) clinical factors over the past 20 years; what plans he has to improve the present situation; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The data in question is not currently held in the format requested.

■ General Practitioners: Wrekin

Mark Pritchard: [\[18554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to maintain the level of out of hours GP cover in The Wrekin constituency.

Jo Churchill:

Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has advised that it is undertaking a number of steps to maintain the level of out of hours (OOH) general practitioner (GP) cover in the region. The CCG provide a GP out of hours service, which is part of an Integrated Urgent Care Service that is commissioned jointly across the 16 CCGs of the West Midlands. The OOH GP service is covered by a combination of full-time GPs, as well as local GPs that provide OOH cover on a sessional basis. Extended access appointments and enhanced access appointments are also available to ensure patients have the care they need, at the right place and the right time.

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

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Closures

Tulip Siddiq: [18823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many sexual health clinics have closed in (a) England and (b) London since 2010.

Jo Churchill:

We do not hold this information centrally.

■ Haemochromatosis: Diagnosis

Ms Angela Eagle: [21158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve early diagnosis of genetic haemochromatosis.

Jo Churchill:

Steps to improve diagnosis of rare conditions, including genetic haemochromatosis, are being taken through the implementation of the of the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rare-diseases-strategy>

The Genomic Medicine Service is supported by the National Genomic Test Directory which specifies the genomic tests that are commissioned by the National Health Service in England. Genetic haemochromatosis is included in the Test Directory.

■ Health Professions

Munira Wilson: [18912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to ensure adequate (a) public and (b) clinical understanding of the functions of medical associate professions.

Helen Whately:

The Department is working with the General Medical Council (GMC), Health Education England (HEE) and other key stakeholders to ensure that there is adequate public and clinical understanding of the roles of physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs).

The GMC is developing a communications programme to raise awareness among doctors of the PA and AA roles. It is also holding a patient roundtable which will explain the role of PAs and AAs. The GMC will use the roundtable as an opportunity to ask patient organisations how best to raise the profile of PAs and AAs and develop patient understanding of what they do.

HEE has set up a Medical Associate Professions (MAP) Oversight Board which is developing a MAPs career framework to establish common standards for continuing professional development and a strong quality management framework.

■ Health Professions: Regulation

Jeremy Hunt: [\[21209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department undertook to ensure that professional regulatory bodies investigated the conduct of registrants involved in the care of patients during the time period of that investigation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

As independent bodies, the regulators of healthcare professionals are responsible for operational matters concerning the discharge of their statutory duties. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate for Ministers to become involved with individual fitness to practise cases.

The Morecambe Bay Investigation recommended that healthcare professionals who had provided care that fell short of the expected standards should be held to account. As a result, the General Medical Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) investigated the conduct of the registrants involved. These investigations have been completed.

In May 2018, at the request of both the Department and the NMC, the Professional Standards Authority published a 'Lessons Learned Review' into the handling of concerns relating to the handling of the Morecambe Bay fitness to practise cases.

■ Hearing: Testing

Lilian Greenwood: [\[20463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of accessibility of hearing test appointments for care home residents.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[20464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of training for health care workers on treating people with hearing loss.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[20465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) accessibility and (b) availability of hearing test appointments for elderly people.

Helen Whately:

No formal assessments have been made. NHS England published 'The Commissioning Framework for Hearing Loss Services' to provide guidance to the health and care system to address inconsistencies including in access and variation in provision. NHS England also produced national guidance for more local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for the commissioning of hearing loss services based on the local needs of their population including for elderly people.

They use a local commissioning process that determines how providers deliver care for the National Health Service area they are responsible for including in residential and nursing homes. This is not monitored nationally.

There is agreed national education and training for people working in hearing services.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages

Alex Norris:

[\[20607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of HRT shortages on (a) work attendance and (b) productivity.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not made an assessment of the effect of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) shortages on work attendance and productivity.

We are aware of ongoing supply issues with some HRT preparations due to a range of issues including manufacturing issues, regulatory issues and problems accessing the raw pharmaceutical ingredient as well as commercial decisions made by some companies to divest these products. While some HRT products are affected by supply issues, alternative HRT products have remained available.

We have been working closely with all suppliers of HRT preparations to maintain overall supply to patients and anticipate the supply situation will start to improve from the end of February 2020.

■ Incontinence: Children

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[20472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of paediatric continence services for children throughout (a) England, (b) the North East and (c) Sunderland.

Helen Whately:

Continence services are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). Later this year the National Bladder and Bowel Project Group will undertake an audit of CCGs across all regions in England to assess the commissioning of continence services.

Sunderland CCG is working with providers to improve the pathway in the local area, where continence services are currently provided by:

- South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (commissioned by Sunderland CCG), which provides a bladder and bowel service for both adults and children. This includes the provision of products using a locally agreed policy; and
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (commissioned by Sunderland City Council), which provides the 0-19 service and support services including level 1

continence support for nocturnal enuresis, constipation and toilet training and initiating first line treatments.

■ Infant Mortality: West Midlands

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18691\]](#)

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

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Office for National Statistics publishes annual data on child and infant mortality in England and Wales.

The data shows that the rates of infant mortality have decreased in Birmingham and the West Midlands (Metropolitan County) between 2016 and 2018, the most recent year for which data is available.

YEAR	INFANT MORTALITY RATE (DEATHS PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS)	
	West Midlands (Metropolitan County)	Birmingham
2016	7.1	8.2
2017	6.3	7.1
2018	6.3	6.4

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the rate of infant mortality in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Most infant deaths occur in the neonatal period, within 28 days after births.

Birmingham and Solihull Local Maternity System have agreed trajectories to reduce neonatal mortality rates in line with the national ambition to halve 2010 neonatal mortality rates by 2025.

The Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships are working to reduce neonatal mortality across Local Maternity Systems. Key interventions include implementing an enhanced and targeted continuity of carer model of midwifery care to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable mothers and babies; increased personalisation and delivering care closer to home; and initiatives to reduce smoking in pregnancy and increase rates of breastfeeding.

■ Leicester Hospital: Land

Claudia Webbe: [\[18881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the proposed sale of land on the Leicester General Hospital site, what assessment he has made of that hospital's future demand for additional capacity.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The proposals for reconfiguring Leicester's hospitals are subject to public consultation.

The plans involve the disposal of land that will no longer be needed under the proposal.

The Trust have undertaken a full review of their estate and clinical services over a number of years to ensure that they have an appropriate service delivery strategy supported by the most appropriate estate.

■ Leicester Hospital: Public Consultation

Claudia Webbe: [\[18880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken to consult people resident in Leicester on the proposed changes to Leicester General Hospital.

Claudia Webbe: [\[18882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has been made of the potential risk to hepatobiliary patients in Leicester of dividing kidney transplant and nephrology services between the Leicester General Hospital and Glenfield Hospital sites.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The pre-consultation business case on the proposed reconfiguration of three hospitals in Leicester, including Leicester General Hospital, requires approval at a local, regional and national level prior to the commencement of formal public consultation. It is anticipated that this process will soon be completed. Subject to this, a consultation will follow.

In January 2020 the three Clinical Commissioning Groups set out a plan to consult the public. Regular discussions have taken place with the local authorities, councillors and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees throughout the development of the proposals. Engagement with the public has also been ongoing. This work has enabled the proposals to be refined and developed taking on board the feedback from the local population.

Leicester's Hospitals are currently undertaking a transformation of Intensive Care Services, which includes moving the Level 3 Intensive Care Unit and associated services from the Leicester General Hospital to the Leicester Royal Infirmary and Glenfield Hospitals. As part of the complex service moves between sites, there will be

a temporary split of nephrology and transplant services between the Leicester General Hospital and Glenfield Hospital. It is not anticipated that there will be any resulting effect on, or risk for hepatobiliary patients, who are cared for under a different clinical service.

■ Lung Cancer: Screening

Derek Twigg: [21150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to introduce a national screening programme for lung cancer, including using a blood test.

Jo Churchill:

Screening for lung cancer is included as part of the United Kingdom National Screening Committee's (UK NSC) 2020/21 workplan. However this is to review the offer to screen for lung cancer using low dose computed tomography (CT) screening. The UK NSC is now reviewing this condition in light of the recent publication of the NELSON trial results which used CT screening for former and current smokers. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1911793>

The UK NSC has not looked at the evidence to screen for lung cancer using a blood test due to the absence of published peer reviewed evidence on this. The UK NSC will review any programme in light of any new published evidence. More information and how to participate in UK NSC consultations can be read at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process>

■ Lung Diseases: Air Pollution

Zarah Sultana: [18874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the effects poor air quality and pollution on lung health.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's Clean Air Strategy, published in January 2019, sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources including transport, industry, agriculture and domestic settings. These actions will reduce the impact of air pollution on human health. The Strategy sits alongside the 2017 UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, which focuses on reducing emissions from road transport.

The Government's proposed Environment Bill, reintroduced on 30 January, will deliver key aspects of the Strategy and includes a commitment to set a legally binding target for PM2.5, with the aim of driving action to reduce long-term exposure to fine particulate matter, which impacts on human health, including lung health.

Public Health England works closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to provide alerts and advice during high air pollution episodes to ensure

that key health messages are communicated to vulnerable groups, including those with existing lung conditions.

■ Maternity Services: Fees and Charges

Stephen Timms: [\[21126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women not entitled to NHS healthcare were charged for the cost of maternity care in 2018-19.

Stephen Timms: [\[21128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was (a) invoiced and (b) collected in charges for maternity care in 2018-19.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Maternity Services: Research

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to (a) undertake research on and (b) raise awareness of staff in NHS Trusts of kangaroo care for premature babies.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department currently has no plans to fund research on kangaroo care for premature babies. The National Institute for Health Research welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health. Applications for funding are subject to peer review and judged in open competition.

■ Maternity Services: Standards

Jeremy Hunt: [\[21205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what progress he has made in introducing a mechanism to independently scrutinise perinatal and maternal deaths.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Medical examiners have been introduced on a non-statutory basis from April 2019 to scrutinise all non-coronial deaths and ensure the right deaths are referred to coroners. This includes neonatal death.

Since April 2018, the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch has been investigating all term intrapartum stillbirths (at least 37+0 completed weeks of gestation), neonatal deaths of all term babies born following labour when the baby died within the first week of life (0-6 days) of any cause and maternal deaths.

MBRRACE-UK (Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the United Kingdom) conduct surveillance of all late fetal losses,

stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths and produce Confidential Enquires to provide valuable learning and inform service improvement.

■ Menopause: Training

Peter Kyle: [18642]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the training GPs receive on the treatment of menopausal symptoms.

Helen Whately:

The curriculum for general practitioner (GP) specialty training is set by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the General Medical Council (GMC) approves the curriculum and assessment systems for the programme. The curriculum integrates the GMC's generic professional capabilities framework covering the professional behaviours, knowledge and skills that doctors in GP specialty training must demonstrate.

The RCGP Curriculum: Being a General Practitioner, has recently been reviewed and a wide range of conditions are covered in the clinical topic guides.

The menopause is emphasised in the clinical topic guides that supplement the curriculum and is listed in the Common and Important Conditions section of the topic guide on gynaecology and breast health.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Munira Wilson: [18967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 12328, on Mental Health Services: Children, how many new mental health support teams will be provided under the NHS Long Term Plan.

Munira Wilson: [18969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 12328, on Mental Health Services: Children, which areas of the country the new mental health support teams will cover by 2023-24.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The first 59 mental health support teams are becoming operational as part of the first wave of 25 'trailblazer' areas. In July 2019, NHS England confirmed a further 57 areas, where 123 new teams will be developed by early 2021. Further details are available at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/trailblazers/mh-support-teams/

The programme will roll-out to at least 20% to 25% of the country by 2023. What we have learned from the first waves will inform our approach.

Munira Wilson:

[18970]

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, what the eligibility criteria are for (a) urgent and (b) routine cases.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England published in 2015 the Access and Waiting Time Standard for Children and Young People with an Eating Disorder Commissioning Guide. The guidance sets out the criteria for urgent or routine referral for children and young people with eating disorders. The publication is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/cyp-eating-disorders-access-waiting-time-standard-comm-guid.pdf>

■ Mental Health Services: Expenditure

Bambos Charalambous:

[18981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding (a) Clinical Commissioning Groups and (b) local authorities have allocated to low-level mental health support in each year since 2014.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not available in the format requested as this level of granularity is not separately identifiable.

■ Mental Health Services: Finance

Zarah Sultana:

[18873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking through the NHS Long Term Funding Bill to ensure parity in the funding of physical and mental health support services.

Edward Argar:

The purpose of the NHS Long Term Funding Bill is simply to enshrine in law the funding set out in the Long Term Plan, providing an extra £33.9 billion by 2023-24. That provides the National Health Service with the financial certainty it needs to get on and deliver the plan. The Bill does not set out the details of the plan itself or place restrictions on how the NHS should use the funding to support delivery.

However, at the heart of the NHS Long Term plan is the largest expansion of mental health services in a generation. This Government remains committed to putting mental health services on an equal footing with physical health. We are putting more money in and taking more action on mental health than any previous Government. We have committed at least a further £2.3 billion a year to mental health services by 2023/24 which will see spending for children and young people's mental health services growing faster than the overall spend on mental health, which will itself be growing faster than the overall NHS budget.

■ Mental Health Services: Nurses

Munira Wilson: [18953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health nurses have been employed by NHS funded services at each band, in each year since 2010.

Munira Wilson: [18954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) mental health social workers, (b) approved mental health professionals and (c) independent mental health advocates have been employed by local authorities in each year since 2010.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

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

The attached table shows the number of mental health nurses employed at National Health Service trusts and CCGs at each band as at October 2019, the latest available data and at September each year since 2010.

There is no measure of the number of mental health nurses employed in NHS-funded services carried out in the private sector.

Skills for Care completed a survey of local authorities and found that there are an estimated 3,730 approved mental health professionals in England. This data can be found at the following link:

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/Topics/Social-work/Approved-Mental-Health-Professional-workforce.aspx>

The Department does not hold data for mental health social workers or independent mental health advocates.

Attachments:

1. Mental Health Nurses by band [Mental Health Nurses by band.xlsx]

■ Mental Health Services: Schools

Munira Wilson: [18978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of (a) schools and (b) colleges have a mental health support team.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Barnsley Central (Dan Jarvis MP) on 4 February 2020 to Question [12271](#).

■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists

Damien Moore:

[\[18917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reduce waiting times for mental health care support for (a) adults and (b) children.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have already introduced the first ever access and waiting time standards for mental health services, including for children and young people's eating disorder services, for early intervention for people experiencing a first episode of psychosis and for accessing psychological and talking therapies. These are being met or are on track for delivery by the end of 2020/21.

The National Health Service has also committed to testing and rolling out comprehensive waiting time standards for adults and children as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

■ Mental Health Services: Young People

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[18979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that GPs are trained to respond to young people attending an appointment about their mental health.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The curriculum for general practitioner (GP) specialty training is set by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the General Medical Council (GMC) approves the curriculum and assessment systems for the programme. The curriculum integrates the GMC's generic professional capabilities framework covering the professional behaviours, knowledge and skills that doctors in GP specialty training must demonstrate.

'The RCGP Curriculum: Being a General Practitioner' has recently been reviewed and a wide range of conditions are covered in the clinical topic guides.

The National Health Service has identified child health as a key area for education and training in general practice and young people's mental health is emphasised in the clinical topic guide on children and young people.

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[18980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what mental health training is available for people who work with young people outside of educational settings; what plans he has to introduce training for people who work in those settings.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

All registered healthcare professionals are required to complete training to meet the educational outcomes as set by the regulator of their profession, these include mental health training where necessary. This would cover doctors, nurses and allied health professionals.

We would expect people working in the criminal justice system and local authority children's services to meet the relevant training requirements for those settings.

For people working in other organisations there are a range of training opportunities available, such as mental health first aid, and it would be for each individual organisation to ensure their staff have the appropriate training in mental health issues.

■ NHS

Stephen Timms: [\[21127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to bring forward legislation for a long-term NHS plan.

Edward Argar:

The Government's priority is to support the National Health Service to improve patient outcomes by delivering the Long Term Plan.

We are currently considering the NHS's recommendations thoroughly and will bring forward detailed proposals shortly

■ NHS Trusts: Contracts

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[21156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of the (a) Care Quality Commission and (b) NHS Counter Fraud Authority to take action against companies that charge NHS Trusts for contracted support hours that individuals do not receive.

Helen Whately:

The Care Quality Commission's remit focuses on the quality of care provided to people that use services. Its remit does not extend to identifying and tackling fraud against National Health Service providers. However, should it identify any fraudulent activity whether during an inspection, via wider monitoring of services, or via members of the public, it would notify the responsible organisation, including the NHS Counter Fraud Authority.

Where information is received by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority raising a suspicion of fraud committed by those providing contracted services to or on behalf of the NHS, where appropriate, a criminal investigation will be undertaken and prosecution of those suspected of committing fraud sought. Any abuse of systems to perpetrate fraud are reviewed by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority to inform the development of future prevention measures.

■ NHS Trusts: Coroners

Jeremy Hunt: [\[21208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps

his Department has taken to draw up a national protocol setting out the duties of all Trusts and their staff in relation to inquests, including but not be limited to (a) the avoidance of attempts to fend off inquests, (b) a mandatory requirement not to coach staff or provide model answers, (c) the need to avoid collusion between staff on lines to take and (d) the inappropriateness of relying on coronial processes or expert opinions provided to coroners to substitute for incident investigation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS Improvement, in 2016, published national compulsory guidance on the duties, and the current legislation relating to coroner inquests that National Health Service trusts, foundation trusts, and individual clinicians must follow with regards to coronial processes.

Healthcare professional regulators, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council's guidance requires nurses, midwives and doctors to cooperate with all investigations, formal inquires and inquests.

■ NHS Trusts: Inspections

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[20425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that NHS England draws up a protocol to clarify the division of responsibilities for oversight of service quality and the implementation of measures to correct failures.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Quality Board (NQB) provides coordinated leadership for quality on behalf of the Department, Public Health England, NHS England, the Care Quality Commission, NHS Improvement, NHS Digital and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

The NQB works to promote quality nationally; support local quality improvement with providers, commissioners and those who use services; and identify new challenges and opportunities to improve quality.

Quality Surveillance Groups bring together different parts of the health and care system, to share intelligence about risks to quality and identify those risks to quality at as early a stage as possible.

■ NHS Trusts: Managers

Giles Watling:

[\[18938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the contact details for each NHS Trust of the (a) CEO, (b) maternity board safety champion, (c) medical director and (d) head of midwifery.

Giles Watling: [\[18939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the contact details of each Local Maternity System chair.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department does not collate contact details for the 130 National Health Service trusts and 44 Local Maternity Systems centrally.

■ NHS Trusts: Reviews

Jeremy Hunt: [\[20428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to draw up systematic guidance setting out an appropriate framework for external reviews and professional responsibilities in undertaking them.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have agreed to establish an advisory function for independent reviews which they sponsor, commission or oversee. This will advise on the establishment and best practice management of these types of reviews.

Jeremy Hunt: [\[20429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (a) all external reviews of suspected service failures be registered with the Care Quality Commission and Monitor and (b) that the Care Quality Commission develops a system to collate learning from those reviews and disseminate it to other Trusts.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

National Health Service trusts are asked to submit details of the commissioning and conclusion of relevant external reviews or investigations undertaken in the previous 12 months and describe key outcomes to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as part of the Routine Provider Information Return.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have agreed to establish an advisory function for independent reviews which they sponsor, commission or oversee. This will advise on the establishment and best practice management of these types of reviews.

The CQC does not have a system for disseminating learning to other trusts.

However, Local Maternity Systems (LMSs) and Clinical Networks have a role in sharing learning from reviews and investigations. A recent review of LMSs suggests this is working well with systems for shared learning embedding .

■ NHS: Computer Software

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[20468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2020 to Question 7623 on NHS: Computer Software, whether the table used in the previous answers represents the (a) number of accounts made or (b) number of active individuals using the app on a regular basis.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS App now has over 250,000 registered users and has been designed over many iterations to be usable by all age groups. The table referred to in Question 7623 is the number of active users of the NHS App. These users have been through the registration process, and of these, 76% use the app more than once a month.

■ NHS: Drugs

Martyn Day:

[\[21282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish guidance for (a) medical professionals and (b) the public on access to medicines at the end of the transition period.

Edward Argar:

The United Kingdom has now left the European Union and entered a transition period, which will run until 31 December 2020. EU regulations on medicines, vaccines and medical devices will continue to apply to the UK throughout the transition period, during which we will negotiate a new trade agreement with the EU.

Both the EU and the UK are committed to agreeing a future partnership by the end of 2020 and are working to achieve this. It is in the interests of both the UK and the EU to agree a future partnership that keeps goods flowing, services provided, and business carried out as usual.

The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement will continue to keep medical professionals and the public updated with relevant communications on medicines as the need arises.

■ NHS: Expenditure

Grahame Morris:

[\[18523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was spent from the public purse, in today's prices, on (a) the National Health Service and (b) NHS maternity services, in England, in each year since 2010.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is shown in the following table. The table sets out total National Health Service revenue expenditure since 2010/11 in today's prices. It is not possible to provide a meaningful data series showing NHS spend on maternity services as the data collected from primary care trusts prior to 2013/14 is not

comparable with that collected from clinical commissioning groups in subsequent years.

YEAR	TOTAL NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE REVENUE EXPENDITURE ^(1,2) (£ BILLION)
2010/11	112.9
2011/12	114.4
2012/13	114.7
2013/14	116.8
2014/15	119.6
2015/16	123.1
2016/17	123.7
2017/18	125.4
2018/19	127.8

Notes:

¹ Real terms prices calculated using gross domestic product deflators published by HM Treasury on 7 January 2020.

² Departmental revenue expenditure used as a proxy for NHS expenditure as the series pre-dates the creation of NHS England.

■ NHS: Reorganisation

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[20427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to draw up a protocol on how to manage organisational change that transfers responsibilities and accountabilities.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Since the publication of the Morecambe Bay Investigation, the Department and the National Health Service have put in place a number of measures that are designed to ensure that organisational change is well managed.

These include arrangements to support local integration of services and strengthened regional support and oversight. The NHS has also developed a Long Term Plan to provide clear strategic direction to organisations making local changes.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for ensuring that organisational changes such as the merger of provider organisations are in the interests of patients and taxpayers and manage any risks effectively.

■ NHS: Reviews

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[21207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to (a) establish a proper framework, if necessary statutory, on which future investigations could be promptly established, including setting out the arrangements necessary to maintain independence and work effectively and efficiently and (b) clarify responsibilities of current and former health service staff to cooperate with an investigation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch was established in 2017 to investigate to improve patient safety and create a learning culture across the National Health Service.

The Health Service Safety Investigations Bill was introduced in the previous Parliament. This legislation will establish a fully independent arms-length patient safety investigation body, create a statutory 'safe space' in this body and provide the new body with powers to discharge its investigative function effectively. These include the power to ask individuals, to attend to answer questions or to provide information, documents equipment or other information as required.

The Department will bring forward these proposals when Parliamentary time allows.

■ NHS: Standards

Jeremy Hunt:

[\[21206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in March 2015, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the importance of putting quality first is re-emphasised and local arrangements are reviewed to identify any need for personal or organisational development, including amongst clinical leadership in commissioning organisations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department is committed to ensure that services across the health and care system are of the highest quality through ongoing system regulation and oversight.

The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of quality for health and adult social care in England, it uses its powers to provides assurance and encourages improvement.

The new regional architecture has quality embedded into the role and responsibility of Clinical Quality Directors and other regional leads as well as through clinical networks and Local Maternity Systems.

The National Quality Board is reviewing the national model of quality surveillance, specifically the role of Quality Surveillance Groups in monitoring and managing quality issues within local health and care systems.

■ Organs: Donors

Dan Jarvis:

[\[19945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2020 to Question 8296 on Transplant Surgery: Finance, if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's modelling on the anticipated impact of that Act on the number of organs (a) donated and (b) transplanted in each of the transplant units in England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 February 2020]: Officials in the Department, NHS Blood and Transplant and NHS England have worked together to model the anticipated impact of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019 on the number of organs donated and transplanted across England. A summary of this analysis is shown in the following table. These projections have been produced using the best available evidence and will be revised as the precise impact of the switch to an opt-out system becomes clearer.

Projected number of deceased donors in England

YEAR	2017/18 (ACTUAL)	2018/19 (ACTUAL)	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Deceased Donors	1,358	1,371	1,398	1,430	1,497	1,597	1,606

Projected number of adult transplants in England per centre

CENTRE	BASELINE	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Birmingham	383	410	432	454	484	488
Bristol	104	106	110	116	124	125
Cambridge	300	304	317	333	356	359
Coventry	46	48	50	52	56	57
Guy's	187	183	191	200	214	215
Harefield	83	91	99	103	110	110

CENTRE	BASELINE	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
King's College	205	212	221	232	247	249
Leeds	247	259	270	284	303	306
Leicester	101	95	100	105	112	113
Liverpool	90	90	94	98	105	106
Manchester	264	303	319	335	357	360
Newcastle	161	187	198	208	221	224
Nottingham	66	75	79	83	88	89
Oxford	221	230	240	250	268	269
Papworth	88	100	112	116	123	124
Plymouth	49	48	50	53	56	57
Portsmouth	74	85	88	93	100	100
Royal Free	200	223	233	246	262	264
Royal London	146	131	137	144	154	155
Sheffield	51	56	59	62	66	67
St George's	116	112	117	123	132	133
West London Renal and Transplant Centre	144	151	157	165	176	178
Total	3,326	3,498	3,671	3,857	4,113	4,149

Notes: Assumptions for transplant projections

1. The projections are based primarily on an assumed number of donors for the next five financial years which incorporate extra donors due to opt-out legislation. The donor projections may be subject to change with further statistical modelling.

2. The conversion from target donors to transplants are based on the conversion rates observed over the last three years (2016/17 – 2018/19). The projections assume several organ utilisation initiatives will have an impact on the number of transplants.

3. The transplant projections are not based upon the number of English residents, but transplants performed at centres in England. This is because organ allocation arrangements are United Kingdom-wide and not limited to England.

■ Pancreatic Cancer: Research

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[18429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to (a) increase investment in research into pancreatic cancer, (b) establish a dedicated awareness campaign to enable the earlier identification of the symptoms of pancreatic cancer and (c) improve consistency in the application of treatment and care standards for patients diagnosed with pancreatic 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) 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.

■ Perinatal Mortality: Reviews

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many open serious case reviews there are into perinatal deaths in England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

A Serious Case Review is the terminology previously used to describe the local agency joint response review into safeguarding concerns (e.g. concerns about neglect, abuse) where the child has died or been seriously harmed. These are now referred to as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Information on the number of open cases of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews is not held centrally.

■ Pharmacy

Stephen Timms: [\[21129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to help people affected by the abolition of the Pharmacy First scheme.

Jo Churchill:

The Pharmacy First scheme across London was a locally commissioned National Health Service scheme providing people with self-limiting minor conditions with products that could mainly be bought over the counter. The scheme has been replaced by the nationally commissioned NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service which commenced in October 2019 and people can still access self-care advice direct from their community pharmacy. We are recommending people look to their pharmacy first by way of treatment for minor ailments.

■ Pharmacy2U

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[21142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 14948, how many regular users there are of NHS Pharmacy2U service; what estimate he has made of the number of users in 2023-24; and what steps his Department is taking to promote that service.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has made no such assessment of how many users of Pharmacy2U there are and what would be the number of users in 2023/24.

The public and the Department value a range of pharmaceutical service providers and we do not promote the use of one provider over another one.

■ Physician Associates

Munira Wilson: [\[18914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of physician associates on the training of junior doctors.

Helen Whately:

Physician associates (PAs) play an invaluable role in complementing and supporting doctors to provide safe, high-quality care to patients across the National Health Service as part of a multi-disciplinary team. PAs are central to the Government's policy to develop a stronger and more effective NHS workforce to meet future need.

As the General Medical Council will regulate both medical practitioners and PAs, it will have oversight of the education and training arrangements for both professions and will be able to monitor any impact on the training of junior doctors.

■ Podiatry: Staff

Pat McFadden: [\[18581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many qualified chiropodists there are in the NHS in England; and how many there were in 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), but not staff working in primary care or in general practitioners surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the number of chiropodists employed at National Health Service trusts and CCGs as at October 2019, the latest available data compared to October 2010, full time equivalent.

OCTOBER 2010	OCTOBER 2019	CHANGE	% CHANGE
3,072	2,703	-369	12%

■ Podiatry: Training

Pat McFadden: [\[18582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the NHS budget is for chiropody training; and what that budget was 2015.

Helen Whately:

There is no dedicated National Health Service budget for chiropody training, now formally called podiatry. Funding for elements of training, such as clinical placements, is included within the education and training tariff and paid to placement providers by Health Education England.

In December 2019 the Government announced additional maintenance grant funding, which will be available from September 2020 for new and continuing students of £5,000. In addition, students with child dependants will benefit from an extra £1,000 and new students studying a specialist subject including podiatry will be able to access a further £1,000. These grants are on top of student loan allowances and do not need to be re-paid.

■ Podiatry: Waiting Lists

Pat McFadden: [\[18583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for an NHS chiropody appointment in England.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not centrally collected.

■ Prostate Cancer: Screening

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[20399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the National Screening Committee to conduct the next review of the evidence on screening for prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

Screening for prostate cancer forms part of the United Kingdom National Screening Committee's 2019/20 work plan. A three-month public consultation will take place in summer 2020 where a recommendation will be made for the screening of prostate cancer.

Further information and how to participate in the consultation is available at the following link:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/screening-recommendations.php>

■ Public Health: Finance

Jim McMahon: [\[20591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of reductions in local government public health funding on food safety and public protection.

Jo Churchill:

Currently, the allocation of funding for food safety and public protection at a local level is ultimately for decision by local authorities as there is no ring fencing.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA), as the Government department with responsibility for food safety, sets the standards that local authorities should meet and monitors delivery against these. FSA monitoring data provides evidence that resources for food safety are reducing but that the available resources are being targeted to where there is greatest risk.

Where performance issues are identified within individual local authorities, the FSA takes action to secure improvements including highlighting where resources are not sufficient to ensure public health protection.

■ Social Services

Bridget Phillipson: [\[18770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2020 to question 7622 on Social Services, when he plans to publish a Green Paper on adult social care.

Helen Whately:

We will work across parties to seek consensus on a plan to fix the crisis in social care – giving every older person the dignity and security they deserve. We will bring forward a plan for social care this year.

■ Speech and Language Disorders: Health Services

Helen Hayes: [\[20533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve out-of-hospital care for patients with communication and swallowing needs.

Helen Whately:

Speech and language therapists in the United Kingdom work with children and adults to help them overcome or adapt to a vast array of disorders of speech, language, communication and swallowing.

The NHS People Plan work programme is completing a review of all allied health professions. The capacity requirement is being modelled to 2024. This will look at both the current and future capacity need for the allied health professions including speech and language therapists.

■ Speech and Language Therapy

Helen Hayes: [\[20534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of specialist speech and language therapists in the NHS; and what plans he has to increase the number of those therapists.

Helen Whately:

As at November 2019 NHS Digital Hospital and Community Health Service workforce statistics report there were 6,284 full time equivalent speech and language therapists in England.

The NHS People Plan, which will be published by the National Health Service in early 2020, will set out a clear framework for growing and sustaining a well-skilled workforce across the whole NHS.

In December 2019 the Government announced additional maintenance grant funding of at least £5,000 per academic year for students studying nursing, midwifery and

most allied health professions, including speech and language therapy, which will be available from September 2020 for new and continuing students at English universities. In addition, students with child dependants will benefit from an extra £1,000.

■ Suicide: Males

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[18771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2020 to Question 11501 on Suicide: Males, if he will make it policy to include representatives from BAME communities in the ONS working group.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is leading the programme of work to analyse the latest data relating to suicide registrations, informed by a group of academics. The ONS has selected the academics from the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group according to their specific expertise in suicide prevention. We expect the ONS will publish its findings in due course.

■ Twins Trust: Maternity Services

Giles Watling:

[\[18937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Twins Trust Maternity Engagement Project in reducing (a) perinatal deaths and (b) neonatal admissions; and what steps he is taking to encourage trusts not currently involved in that project to make improvements in their care.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department provided grant funding for the Twins Trust Maternity Engagement Project which provided evidence that implementing National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on managing twin and multiple pregnancies can significantly reduce twin stillbirths, neonatal deaths and neonatal admissions. The two year evaluation demonstrated an 18% reduction in neonatal deaths, a 7% reduction in stillbirths, a 23% reduction in neonatal admissions, and a 6% reduction in emergency caesarean sections.

Based on the evidence generated through the Engagement Project, the Saving Babies' Lives care bundle (version two) strongly encourages providers and commissioners to implement NICE guidance and stipulates best practice for multiple pregnancies.

The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, highlights our aim to roll out the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle (version two) across every maternity unit in England in 2019.

■ Veterans: Health Services

Stephanie Peacock: [\[19053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of adequacy of the provision of health services for veterans in each local authority in the UK.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[19055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will undertake a review of the provision of local health services for veterans throughout the UK.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In England, individual local authorities are responsible for completing local health needs assessments. Guidance has been provided that explains how local authorities should consider veterans, this includes delivering on the armed forces covenant.

The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will consider options for updating this guidance.

In addition, the NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned central needs assessments on veteran mental health services, musculoskeletal rehabilitation services, prosthetics and veterans' mental health needs in the criminal justice system. There is also a planned national engagement on veteran families' health needs to start in March 2020.

HOME OFFICE

■ Assaults on Police

Lee Anderson: [\[18965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to fears of violence against police officers, what steps she is taking to support the mental wellbeing of police officers.

Kit Malthouse:

We have accelerated work to establish a Police Covenant, recognising the bravery and commitment of our police who work night and day to keep us safe. One of the key areas of focus will be the health and wellbeing of our police, along with physical protection and support for families.

The wellbeing of our police is a key priority for this Government and we have invested in programmes which offer help directly to officers. This included £7.5 million to fund the development of the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS), which was launched in April 2019. The NPWS has developed evidence-based guidance, advice, tools and resources which can be accessed by forces, as well as individual officers and staff. There is an emphasis on prevention, for example by helping forces to identify mental health issues early through psychological screening, helping officers to access support earlier. This helps Chief Constables in their duty to ensure the

wellbeing of all officers and staff, which includes supporting officers with specific welfare needs by signposting to relevant services and additional support.

■ Cleveland Police: Recruitment

Mike Hill: [\[19063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase recruitment to Cleveland Police.

Kit Malthouse:

In October 2019 Home Office confirmed officer allocations for every force in England and Wales in the first year of the uplift. The Home Office is working with the National Police Chiefs' Council to support all forces deliver these allocations.

Cleveland will receive 72 officers in year one of the uplift. Cleveland Police will receive up to £143.3m in funding in 2020/21 an increase of up to £10.1m on 2019/20.

The recruitment of officers is an operational decision for Chief Constables working with their locally elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

■ Crime Prevention

Louise Haigh: [\[21341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what specific outcomes she plans to set police forces in order to reduce crime.

Kit Malthouse:

In return for the biggest investment in policing for over a decade, it is right that the government holds the policing sector to account for delivering for the public. We will expect the police to achieve measurable improvements across a range of outcomes, focused on crime reduction. These outcomes include: to reduce murder, serious violence and neighbourhood crime; to improve victim satisfaction; to help those whose lives are torn apart by domestic abuse; and to roll up county lines.

■ Crime: Greater Manchester

Graham Stringer: [\[20384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she last received crime performance figures from Greater Manchester Police.

Graham Stringer: [\[20385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to verify the most recent crime performance figures from Greater Manchester Police.

Kit Malthouse:

Greater Manchester Police's most recent crime data submission to the Home Office was received in August 2019. This covered police recorded crime up the end of June 2019. There has been a disruption to the regular supply of crime data since the force implemented a new Integrated Operational IT system in July 2019.

The Home Office carries out regular quality assurance of data received from all police forces in England and Wales before data are published as official statistics.

■ Crimes of Violence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[20612]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to reduce the level of violent crime.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government's Manifesto set out an ambitious package of reforms to deliver on the people's priorities and tackle violent crime and safeguard people's streets and neighbourhoods.

As announced in the Queen's Speech this includes the introduction of the Serious Violence Bill, which will put a duty on police, councils and health authorities to prevent and reduce serious violence. We have also announced an additional £25 million of targeted investment to increase our efforts to tackle county lines, including expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre.

We have provided the £100 million Serious Violence Fund to provide support to the 18 police force areas most affected by serious violence. Of this, Thames Valley Police has been allocated £1.94 million to pay for a surge in police operational activity, such as increased patrols in greater numbers for longer periods of times, as well as new equipment and technology, improved intelligence and targeting, and an enhanced investigative response.

A further £1.16m from the Fund was invested in developing Thames Valley Police's Violence Reduction Unit. We continue to prioritise funding for tackling serious violence, which will be backed with £119 million in 2020-21. On 29 December 2019 the Home Secretary announced a further £35 million to continue funding Violence Reduction Units. Thames Valley Police has been allocated another £1.16m for 2020/21 to continue to tackle the root causes of serious violence.

We have invested £220 million in early intervention and prevention initiatives to support children and young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence, through the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund and £200 million Youth Endowment Fund and have put in place a landmark review into drug misuse.

■ D-Day Landings: Anniversaries

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[18895]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date (a) Hampshire Constabulary and (b) Thames Valley Police will receive their mutual aid submissions submitted following D-Day 75.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[18896]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date will (a) Hampshire Constabulary and (b) Thames Valley Police receive the decision for their Special Grant application following D-Day 75.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[18897]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of her Department's processing time for Hampshire Constabulary and Thames Valley Police's application for special grant funding following D-Day 75 on the operational effectiveness of Hampshire Constabulary and Thames Valley Police.

Kit Malthouse:

Mutual aid payments are managed between the respective police forces.

The Home Office has received a Special Grant application from Hampshire Police for funding in relation to D-Day 75 and this is currently being considered. No application has been received from Thames Valley Police in relation to this operation.

Police forces should include within their policing and budget plans reasonable contingencies for unexpected events within their areas.

■ Deportation

Zarah Sultana:

[18870]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has chartered flights scheduled for deportations in the next six months.

Chris Philp:

Most enforced immigration returns are undertaken using scheduled flights, alongside fare-paying passengers. However, charter flight operations are an important means to return foreign national offenders and immigration offenders where there are limited scheduled routes or where the returnees may be disruptive. We utilise both approaches flexibly to best meet operational needs and maximise value for money.

For operational reasons, it is not possible to disclose full details of the returns charter flight programme over the next six months.

■ Domestic Abuse: Disclosure of Information

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[21153]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timescale is for reviewing and updating the guidance on the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme; and whether she plans to introduce a (a) monitoring process to ensure that applicants are correctly assessed as being at immediate risk of harm and (b) standardised procedure across all police forces in England and Wales to protect potential victims from harm.

Victoria Atkins:

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime and the Government is committed to doing everything we can to tackle it.

The Domestic Abuse Bill includes proposals to place the guidance underpinning the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS, also known as “Clare’s Law”) on a statutory footing. The guidance is currently under review and will be issued after the Bill gains Royal Assent, to coincide with commencement. We plan to make a draft of the statutory guidance available for Lord’s Committee Stage.

As part of this review, we are working with police and the College of Policing to consider the issue of the timeliness of disclosure and effective safety planning, in particular where there is an identified risk of harm to the applicant.

Placing an express duty on police to have regard to the revised guidance is intended to improve its consistent application across all police forces.

■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

Munira Wilson: [\[18919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to the provision of support services for (a) victims of domestic abuse and (b) their children as set out in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

Victoria Atkins:

We will publish an updated impact assessment alongside the re-introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

As I indicated at Second Reading of the Bill in the last Parliament (Official Report, House of Commons, 2 October 2019, column 1331), we will prioritise the funding for the Bill in the 2020 Spending Review.

■ Fire Prevention: Inspections

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[18898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were employed in fire safety inspecting teams in (a) 2010, (b) 2017 and (c) 2018.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office collected information on the number of staff employed by Fire and Rescue Services for fire safety activities for the first time in 2019.

The information can be found in FS10 in FIRE1204 (link below). This showed that in England on 31 March 2019 there were 72 fire engineers (Full Time Equivalent) employed by FRSs, 503 staff competent to carry out a short audit, 951 competent to carry out an audit, 597 competent to serve an enforcement notice and 407 competent to serve a prohibition notice.

As FRS staff are likely to be competent to carry out more than one of these activities, the categories are not mutually exclusive.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#fire-prevention-and-protection>

■ Hate Crime

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[20378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the definition of a hate incident set out on the College of Policing's website; and if she will make a statement.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[20379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the annual cost to the public purse of the police responding to non-crime hate incidents in England.

Kit Malthouse:

The College of Policing is independent from Government and its role is clear: setting high professional standards; sharing what works best; acting as the national voice of policing; and ensuring police training and ethics is of the highest possible quality.

The College of Policing has revised its operational guidance on hate crime to help provide clarity on responding to non-crime hate incidents, among other things. The College has consulted on this draft revised operational guidance and plans to publish this in due course to support forces dealing with hate crimes and hate incidents.

The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information is not collected on non-crime hate incidents or the investigative resource allocated to them.

■ Health Services: EU Nationals

Andrew Percy: [\[20439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much the NHS surcharge will be for EU migrants arriving after the transition period.

Chris Philp:

Under the new UK Points-Based Immigration System, EU citizens arriving from 1 January 2021 will be treated equally to non-EU citizens. EU citizens resident in the UK before the end of December 2020 will be able to access healthcare as they do now and will be able to secure these rights by obtaining status through the EU Settlement Scheme.

The Government is committed to agreeing a future partnership with the EU by December 2020. The details, including any agreement on reciprocal healthcare, remain a matter for negotiation.

■ Home Office: Amazon Web Services

Sarah Owen: [\[21394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) efficiency and (b) effectiveness of using Amazon Web Services as a public cloud hosting service.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office recently completed a procurement for "Continuity Cloud Services". We assessed a wide number of Cloud Service Providers available on G-Cloud 11.

This was awarded to Amazon Web Services via G-Cloud 11 on the basis of best technical fit for existing Home Office requirements and met all of our 'must have' requirements. The procurement has enabled the Home Office to take advantage of discounts and savings opportunities available on G-Cloud 11.

Under this new contract we are already on track to save 28% or over £6m over the next 12 months on our cloud spend with Amazon Web Services compared to what we would have spent if we had extended our previous contract based on old terms. The Home Office follows best practice for Cost Efficiency, we continually review our cloud spend to ensure that we are getting best value for money.

We take regular action to ensure that our usage is optimised, and we receive regular support from AWS via their Enterprise Support Programme. The Home Office is looking to achieve further efficiencies on cloud services by contracting with a wider number of cloud service providers in the future.

Sarah Owen:

[\[21395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data Amazon Web Services has access to as the public cloud host for her Department.

James Brokenshire:

Amazon Web Services have publicly available policies and statements on access to customer data, which broadly state that they do not access data available within AWS accounts without receiving consent from the account holder. In line with wider government policy we follow the NCSC's 'Cloud Security Principles' & 'Standard Architecture for UK-Official on AWS'.

The Home Office has policies in place to ensure that our data is protected when it is hosted with Public Cloud Service Providers and we have full control of access to our accounts and data within them. Specifically, our policy is to mandate that all data is encrypted during transit and at rest, this means that if data is accessed by a third party from outside of the Home Office it is protected.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Alex Sobel:

[\[19047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of EU migrants who will come to the UK annually under the proposed immigration system compared to under the current system.

Alex Sobel:

[\[19048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the points-based system for immigration announced by her Department on 19 February 2020 on the number of migrants from Commonwealth countries.

Kevin Foster:

More detailed analysis on the points-based system and individual routes will be published shortly.

■ Immigration: Windrush Generation

Alex Sobel:

[\[18971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect the human rights of migrants from the Windrush generation.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office, in its policies and its practices, must be compliant with its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights as enacted under the Human Rights Act.

We are committed to righting the wrongs suffered by the Windrush generation, under successive governments and have put in place a number of steps to do this. On 16 April 2018, the Home Office established a Taskforce to help members of the Windrush generation resolve their immigration status as quickly as possible and the Windrush Scheme was launched on 30 May 2018.

On 3 April 2019, the Windrush Compensation Scheme was launched in order to ensure that the Windrush generation, are properly compensated for losses and impacts suffered as a result of not being able to demonstrate their lawful status.

We have introduced additional safeguards to ensure that those who are lawfully present in the UK are not disadvantaged by measures put in place to tackle illegal migration. These include additional support within the checking services provided to employers, landlords and public service providers and temporary restrictions on the parameters of proactive data-sharing, to ensure members of the Windrush generation are not wrongly impacted.

■ Knives: Crime

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[20611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce knife crime in (a) Slough and (b) the UK.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is determined to turn the tide on knife crime in all areas, wherever it occurs. Across England and Wales, we are recruiting 20,000 more police officers over the next three years and increasing sentences for violent criminals. We have made it easier for the police to use enhanced stop and search powers and we will introduce a new court order to make it easier for the police to stop and search those who have been convicted of knife crime.

We will also ensure that anyone charged with knife possession will appear before magistrates within days and we are also making £10 million available to the police to equip more officers with tasers. In addition, we have legislated through the Offensive

Weapons Act 2019 to give the police more powers and to ensure knives are less likely to make their way on to the streets and we will also be introducing the Serious Violence Bill to place a duty on the police, councils and health authorities to work together to prevent and tackle serious violence.

Over the last 12 months, we have increased police funding, by £1 billion this year and announced that the amount of funding available to the policing system in 2020 to 2021 will increase by more than £1.1 billion. We have also announced a targeted £25 million to tackle county lines drug gangs, given the links between drugs, county lines and serious violence and we have provided the £100 million Serious Violence Fund to provide support to the 18 police force areas most affected by serious violence.

Of this, Thames Valley Police has been allocated £1.94 million to pay for a surge in police operational activity, such as increased patrols in greater numbers for longer periods of times, as well as new equipment and technology, improved intelligence and targeting, and an enhanced investigative response. A further £1.16m from the Fund was invested in developing Thames Valley Police's Violence Reduction Unit.

We continue to prioritise funding for tackling serious violence, which will be backed with £119 million in 2020-21. On 29 December 2019 the Home Secretary announced a further £35 million to continue funding Violence Reduction Units. Thames Valley Police has been allocated another £1.16m for 2020/21 to continue to tackle the root causes of serious violence.

In addition, the first grant round of the Youth Endowment Fund has also taken place, with 23 successful projects across England and Wales sharing £17.1m over 2 years for work to support children and young people most vulnerable from becoming involved in crime and violence. This includes £975,000 for a project Achieving for Children, being delivered in three locations, Kingston, Richmond and Maidenhead, Berkshire. In addition, through our Early Intervention Youth Fund, the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner has received £822,000 in 2018-20 to help fund a programme of interventions involving outreach and youth work with high risk young people across the force area.

■ Migrant Workers

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[19067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria the Migration Advisory Committee will use to determine shortage occupations from 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has previously set out the methodology which it used when assessing the UK-wide and Scotland specific Shortage Occupation Lists, including in its most recent report published on 29 May 2019.

It will be for the MAC, which is independent of government, to determine whether to continue with the current methodology.

■ National Wildlife Crime Unit

Jo Stevens: [\[20514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful prosecutions the National Wildlife Crime Unit has contributed to since its creation.

Kit Malthouse:

This information is not held centrally.

Jo Stevens: [\[20515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she plans to take to ensure the continued effective prosecution of wildlife criminals after the funding arrangement for the National Wildlife Crime Unit expires at the end of March 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office will be providing specific funding of £136,000 to support the work of the National Wildlife Crime Unit in 2020/21. This will be in addition to the funding central Government will be providing to police forces in England and Wales to tackle all types of crime, including wildlife crime.

■ National Wildlife Crime Unit: Finance

Henry Smith: [\[18576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will guarantee the long-term funding of the National Wildlife Crime Unit; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing that unit's funding to enable its expansion to investigate cyber-enabled wildlife crime.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office will be providing specific funding of £136,000 to support the work of the National Wildlife Crime Unit in 2020/21. This will be in addition to specific funding for the Unit provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the funding central Government will be providing police forces in England and Wales to tackle all types of crime, including wildlife crime.

Decisions about Home Office funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit beyond March 2021 will be taken as part of the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Offensive Weapons

Philip Davies: [\[18574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to bring into force the offence of threatening with an offensive weapon etc in a private place as provided for by section 52 of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

We will commence the offence of threatening with an offensive weapon in private, alongside a number of other measures in the Act, as soon as possible following the publication of Statutory Guidance on measures in the Offensive Weapons Act 2019.

We will be publishing this guidance shortly.

■ Police: Powers

Sir Christopher Chope: [20377]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to the police in England on the use of their common law powers and responsibilities.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office is responsible for the statutory powers available to the Police. There are a limited number of common law powers that the police rely on as the majority have been transposed into statute.

We maintain an open dialogue with the College of Policing and police stakeholders on police powers. Training on use of powers is an operational matter for police forces.

■ Police: Recruitment

Richard Fuller: [18509]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many additional police officers (a) have been recruited nationally in the last 12 months and (b) she plans to allocate to Bedfordshire constabulary in the next 12 months.

Kit Malthouse:

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

In October 2019 Home Office confirmed officer allocations for every force in England and Wales in the first year of the uplift. Bedfordshire Police has been allocated 54 officers in year one of the uplift, to be recruited by the end of March 2021. Decisions on the allocation of officers for years two and three are yet to be taken.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-announces-first-wave-of-20000-police-officer-uplift>

From April 2020 the Home Office will publish quarterly updates outlining the progress on delivering the police uplift.

■ Registration: Marriage

Paul Blomfield: [18774]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to bring forward the regulations necessary to introduce an electronic registration system for marriages.

Kevin Foster:

The General Register Office (GRO) is currently working on the secondary legislation, IT systems and administrative processes that are required to implement the marriage schedule system.

■ Rendition and Torture

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[18863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under what formal process Police Scotland could request evidence from the US Government for an ongoing criminal investigation.

Kit Malthouse:

Where formal evidence is required as part of a criminal investigation, the Police Service of Scotland would contact the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service of Scotland to send a Letter of Request for Assistance to the US Government under the provisions of the 1994 UK-US treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters.

■ Special Constables: Essex

Robert Halfon:

[\[18527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with Essex Police on introducing community special constables in Essex.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Secretary and I have regular bilateral meetings with the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the body which is responsible for the Citizens in Policing Programme, as well as the College of Policing, which supports the programme and is responsible for special constables and police volunteers at a national level.

The National Strategy for the Special Constabulary (2018-2023) details the NPCC's commitment to making better use of special constables, for the benefit of forces, communities and individual volunteers.

■ Special Constables: Recruitment

Robert Halfon:

[\[18524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the recruitment campaign for special constables.

Kit Malthouse:

Special constables bring diverse and valuable skills to police forces that strengthen policing and help forces to develop important links with communities. Recruitment and eligibility criteria of special constables are set locally at the discretion of Chief Officers.

The Home Office Employer Supported Policing (ESP) scheme is a partnership between employers and the police service aimed at encouraging employers to enable

their staff to volunteer as special constables in the communities they serve. We will continue to work closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council's Citizens in Policing Programme and the College of Policing to support the development of a national approach to the attraction and training of special constables.

Robert Halfon:

[\[18526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the monthly 16-hour expectation for special constables on the number applications for special constable roles.

Kit Malthouse:

Special constables are recruited locally by all 43 forces in England and Wales. The minimum number of hours a special constable is required to do is set locally at the discretion of Chief Officers.

The Home Office Employer Supported Policing scheme is a partnership between employers and the police service aimed at encouraging employers to enable their staff to volunteer as special constables in the communities they serve. The Home Office will continue to work closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council's Citizens in Policing Programme and the College of Policing to support the development of a national approach to the attraction and training of special constables.

■ Special Constables: Training

Robert Halfon:

[\[18525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the flexibility of training times for special constables in England.

Kit Malthouse:

We continue to work closely with National Policing Leads to ensure consistency across forces in order to strengthen the national approach to special constables, including their development.

It is the responsibility of individual police forces to ensure that special constables receive the training required to carry out the role and decisions on how to train special constables are taken locally by the Chief Constable.

The College of Policing also provides bespoke training programmes for special constables, as well as national guidance on police standards, including training, which forces can access.

■ Vagrancy Act 1824: Arrests

Layla Moran:

[\[20595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many arrests have been made under the Vagrancy Act 1824 by each police force in (a) England and (b) Wales in each year since 2015.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not centrally hold the information requested as only data on arrests for notifiable offences are collected and offences under the Vagrancy Act are not notifiable.

■ Visas: Entertainers

John Spellar:

[\[19754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether musicians and artistic performers from the EU will be subject to the Tier 5 (Creative and Sporting visa) temporary worker route from 1 January 2021.

Kevin Foster:

Currently, visiting artists, entertainers and musicians can perform at events, take part in competitions and auditions, make personal appearances and take part in promotional activities for up to 6 months without the need for formal sponsorship or a work visa. They can also receive payment for appearance at permit free festivals for up to 6 months, or for up to one month for a specific engagement, under the Visitor route.

Artists wishing to come to the UK for longer-term work will need to do so under the points-based system. There will continue to be special arrangements for creative workers, which in future will encompass both EEA and non-EEA citizens.

■ Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre: Females

Jess Phillips:

[\[21297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on the use of restraints when transporting women from Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre to be deported.

Jess Phillips:

[\[21303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on the use of fines for contractors that do not meet the timescale for getting detainees to report for deportation; and what assessment her Department has made of the effect of such fines on the deportation of women from Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre.

Chris Philp:

It may be necessary to restrain an individual in detention in order to reduce the risk of escape, prevent harm to the public, detainees or staff, or to prevent damage to property. In addition, an individual may be restrained to prevent them from self-harming or obstructing their removal.

Published guidance, and the training received by detainee custody officers makes it clear that physical force, and the use of waist restraint belts or handcuffs, should only be used after a thorough assessment of risk, and in consideration of each individual's personal circumstances. Restraints should be removed at the earliest opportunity.

The Home Office reviews all reports resulting from a use of force to ensure that techniques are used proportionately, that they are justified, and are used for the minimum period required.

There are contractual obligations for IRC suppliers to ensure detainees report on time to the escorting contractor to ensure compliance with scheduled removal directions. Although the Home Office can impose financial and operational remedies if obligations as part of the contract are not met, this would be based on a thorough investigation and consideration of any mitigating factors. In these circumstances, detainee welfare would take precedence over imposing any such penalties.

Robust statutory oversight is provided by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons and Independent Monitoring Boards, ensuring that detainees are treated with proper standards of care and decency in detention and during the removal process. Reports by HMIP and IMBs are published on their respective websites.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[18490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities meet the requirement for major planning developments to contain 10 per cent affordable home ownership, as set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework, published July 2018.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in July 2018 to make it clear that planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10 per cent of homes on major housing sites be made available for affordable home ownership.

The Framework does not represent a mandatory approach and local authorities are best place to assess what is needed in their communities. However, local authorities are expected to comply with the policy and secure the delivery much needed affordable homes for sale, unless they are able to provide evidence that justifies a different approach.

John Healey:

[\[20383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated under the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 to 2021 to date in each (a) region and (b) local authority area.

Christopher Pincher:

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

The programme is delivered by our partners Homes England and the Greater London Authority (GLA), with £4.7 billion allocated to Homes England and £4.8 billion to the GLA.

The way in which Homes England and the GLA allocate this funding across the country is publicly available. To view the further allocations across England regions and local authorities please see the following:

- London funding allocations:
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hfl_allocations_-_location_and_provider.pdf
- Homes England AHP minimum geography funding allocations:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865149/Funding_by_Homes_England_minimum_geography_area_Final.csv/preview
- Homes England summary report:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shared-ownership-and-affordable-homes-programme-2016-to-2021-summary-end-of-september-2019>.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Hilary Benn: [\[21145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what powers local authorities have to enforce the removal of unsafe (a) high pressure laminate cladding and (b) other types of cladding; and in what legislation those powers are contained.

Christopher Pincher:

Local authorities have powers, under the Housing Act 2004, to assess hazards, including fire hazards, and then to take enforcement action against building owners or landlords based on their assessment.

Patrick Grady: [\[21319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he holds information on the number of properties in each region given a zero-value for mortgage purposes by valuation surveyors as a result of the presence of cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not hold this information.

Patrick Grady: [\[21320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the correlation between his Department's issuing of cladding guidance and trends in the level of properties being given a zero-value for mortgage purposes by valuation surveyors.

Patrick Grady: [\[21321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with UK Finance on the correlation between his Department's issuing of cladding guidance and properties being given a zero-value for mortgage purposes by valuation surveyors.

Christopher Pincher:

Building safety advice for building owners, including fire doors, published in January 2020, provides the latest advice for building owners concerned about the fire safety of their building/s. It is not a compliance document for mortgage lenders. Government is continuing to engage with industry representatives, including UK Finance, to understand approaches to risk.

■ Buildings: Safety

Steve Reed: [\[20495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020, to Question 680, on Building Safety, what further steps his Department is taking to ensure that necessary remediation happens at pace.

Christopher Pincher:

For buildings which require non-ACM remedial works, residents' safety remains this Government's utmost priority and there is no excuse for building owners not ensuring that residents are safe in their homes. Government will continue to support leaseholders and is reviewing options on how best to do so.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Stephanie Peacock: [\[20546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authorities are adequately prepared to deal with a Covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

My Department continues to work with local partners, including local authorities and local resilience forums, to assist preparedness to manage the potential impacts of a Covid-19 outbreak. As part of business continuity and local risk assessment processes, local partners already have well developed pandemic-flu plans in place. Local partners are reviewing these plans to reflect the relevant scientific advice on Covid-19.

■ Fire Prevention: Insurance

Steve Reed: [\[20494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the market for professional indemnity insurance for (a) fire assessors, (b) surveyors and (c) other fire safety professionals.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is aware that the market for professional indemnity insurance has hardened and is engaging with the insurance industry on the challenges that presents.

■ Floods: Planning Permission

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[20553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many objections to proposed developments on flood risk land from the Environment Agency have been overturned by the Government since 2009.

Christopher Pincher:

This information is not held in an accessible form, and answering this question would incur disproportionate cost. This answer is given on the assumption that the phrase "overturned by Government" relates to (i) decisions made by independent Inspectors under the jurisdiction of the Planning Inspectorate, and (ii) to decisions made by the Secretary of State in relation to recovered appeals or "called in" planning applications.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Patrick Grady:

[\[21322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of EWS1 forms for external wall fire reviews that have been completed for residential properties in each region of the UK.

Christopher Pincher:

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) produced the EWS1 form for use by industry. Government does not hold data on the number of EWS1 forms which have been completed and expects industry to monitor its use.

Patrick Grady:

[\[21323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of mortgages for residential properties that have been (a) offered and (b) declined by mortgage providers as a result of the completion of an EWS1 form for external wall fire reviews.

Christopher Pincher:

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) produced the EWS1 form for use by industry. Government does not hold data on the number of EWS1 forms which have been completed and expects industry to monitor its use.

■ Homelessness

Apsana Begum: [\[2025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Government policies on tackling on homelessness since 2010.

Luke Hall:

This Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. That is why we have committed to ending rough sleeping within this Parliament and to enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Government is providing £437 million over 2020/21 to tackle homelessness, which marks a £69 million increase on last year's funding.

On 27 February we released national figures from the Official 2019 Rough Sleeping Snapshot which shows that the number of people sleeping on our streets on a single night has fallen for the second time in eight years, down 9% from the previous year. In areas funded by the Rough Sleeping Initiative, the decrease is 12 per cent from the previous year. Additionally, the number of people estimated to be sleeping rough in London has decreased by 11 per cent from the previous year - the first time in six years.

The Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced in 2018. Whilst in early stages, experimental data is indicating positive change. During this period, local authorities accepted a new prevention or relief duty to over 333,000 households. For the households where the prevention duty ended, 58 per cent had been helped to stay in their home or to secure alternative accommodation. For households actually homeless and owed the relief duty, 42 per cent had been helped to secure suitable accommodation. We are undertaking a review of the Act which will report back in March 2020.

■ Homelessness: Young People

Siobhan Baillie: [\[15120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people under the age of 25 who are (a) homeless and (b) at risk of homelessness in Gloucestershire.

Luke Hall:

The table below contains the number of households where the main applicant was under 25 in Gloucestershire during April to June 2019 where the household was assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty, and additionally the number of 18-24 year olds living in temporary accommodation on 30 June 2019 in Gloucestershire. Relief and main duties are owed to those currently homeless. Those at risk of homelessness are those owed a prevention duty.

HOUSEHOLDS WHERE THE MAIN APPLICANT WAS UNDER 25 ASSESSED DURING APRIL TO JUNE 2019:				18-24 YEAR OLDS LIVING IN IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION ON 30TH JUNE 2019
	Threatened with homelessness, owed a prevention duty	Homeless, owed a relief duty	Homeless, unintentionally homeless, and in priority need, owed a main duty	
Gloucestershire	106	125	38	8 1

Notes:

1. Gloucestershire includes the local authority areas of Cheltenham, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Cotswold, South Gloucestershire, Stroud, and Tewkesbury.
2. Temporary Accommodation data cannot include 1 legacy case recorded in Cheltenham, where the household contained no age information.
3. Under 25 includes 16 and 17 year olds where they are the main applicant. There were no 16-17 year olds living in temporary accommodation as the oldest household member.

In December 2019 we announced the allocation of £263 million in funding for 2020/21 to local authorities designed to support them to deliver services to tackle homelessness. The purpose of this funding is to give local authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness, including providing them with temporary accommodation.

■ Housing Infrastructure Fund

John Healey:

[\[14611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much of the housing infrastructure fund has been spent in each (a) region and (b) local authority.

Christopher Pincher:

The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a competitive £5.5 billion fund awarded to areas with the greatest housing need, to support infrastructure projects that will unlock up to 650,000 homes. To date, circa £3 billion has been allocated across every English region to local authorities whose bids meet the funding criteria.

Information on Housing Infrastructure fund spend is routinely published and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>.

■ Housing: Demolition

Caroline Lucas: [19806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many homes were demolished by in each local authority area; and how many new homes in each classification of (a) tenure (b) affordability were built on land released by demolition in each of the last five years.

Christopher Pincher:

Annual statistics on demolitions in England, and in each local authority district, are published in the Department's live table 123 which is available at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>

Statistics on how many new homes were built on land released by demolition, in each classification of tenure and affordability, are not collected by the Department.

■ Leasehold: Reform

Steve Reed: [21370]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's report entitled Leasehold reform, Twelfth Report of Session 2017-19, HC 1468, what steps his Department has taken in response to the recommendation set out in paragraph 201 of that report.

Christopher Pincher:

In 2018 the Government conducted an internal review of the support and advice to leaseholders provided through the Leasehold Advisory Service. The review concluded there is a need to maintain the delivery of free, initial, independent advice, and a need to clarify and strengthen the aims and objectives of the organisation so it is clear what this advice should achieve and for whom it is designed.

It also concluded that the Leasehold Advisory Service should concentrate resources on improving the provision of advice and support to leaseholders, including minimum standards regarding the quality of advice.

The Government continues to work closely with the interim chair and her team on a programme to improve and strengthen the Leasehold Advisory Service, and to consider the advice and support needs of leaseholders in the longer term.

■ Local Economic Partnerships

Stephen Hammond: [18550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the contribution of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) to

increasing levels of (a) economic growth, (b) new local infrastructure and (c) skills among the workforce in each LEP area.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) play a vital role in providing a business voice to inform investment decisions and drive economic growth across the country. LEP performance is monitored through an annual assurance process and regular reporting, such as quarterly data returns.

There are over 1,200 Growth Deal projects in progress with almost 700 projects having been completed by September 2019, covering themes including transport, skills, digital infrastructure, housing and business support.

LEPs are also required to publish Delivery Plans and End of Year Reports, which set out details of the contributions they are making to promote economic growth in their areas.

■ Local Government Finance: Blackpool

Scott Benton:

[\[19914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received from the (a) Chief Executive of Blackpool Council and (b) Leader of Blackpool Council on (i) the local government finance settlement and (ii) Government funding of local authorities.

Luke Hall:

There is no record of written representations or correspondence from either the Chief Executive of Blackpool Council or the Leader of Blackpool Council on the local government finance settlement or Government funding of local authorities. However, I can confirm that through this year's Local Government Finance Settlement, Blackpool's spending power will increase by £8.5 million, or 6.4 per cent since 2019-20.

■ Local Government Finance: Rural Areas

Alicia Kearns:

[\[19996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Fair Funding Review includes consideration of rural indicators.

Luke Hall:

The Government is undertaking a review of the relative needs and resources of local authorities in England. We are working closely with local government representatives and others to examine all of the available evidence for the costs faced by authorities. This includes how factors such as rurality, sparsity and other geographical features affect the cost of delivering services across the country, and how to account for these in a robust manner.

Our aim is to consult on all aspects of the review in the Spring, and implement the review in 2021-22.

■ Local Government: Northamptonshire

Ms Karen Buck: [\[1859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much the lead commissioner for Northamptonshire has received in payments from Northamptonshire county council since May 2018.

Luke Hall:

The total fees paid to the Lead Commissioner by Northamptonshire County Council since May 2018 and up to the end of January 2020 are £177,200.

■ Local Government: Trading Standards

David Linden: [\[15089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department provides (a) financial and (b) other resources to local authorities to help them retain Trading Standards officers.

David Linden: [\[15090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support is available to local authorities for the recruitment of Trading Standards officers.

Luke Hall:

Local authorities receive funding through the Local Government Finance Settlement, and this year's settlement delivers a 4.4 per cent increase from £46.3 billion to £49.2 billion - the largest year on year real terms increase in a decade. Authorities have flexibility over the money they receive, enabling them to work with their residents to decide the best services and resources on which to spend their money, including Trading Standards officers.

Details of funding allocations provided by the Local Government Finance Settlement can be found on the gov.uk website.

■ Multiple Occupation: Standards

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[21141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities cannot impose additional room size standards for houses in multiple occupation than the statutory minimum standards laid down by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

Under House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) legislation, rooms in licensable HMOs that are under 6.51 square metres cannot be used as sleeping accommodation by one person. Local housing authorities have discretion to consider local circumstances and require higher standards within HMO licence conditions, but must not set lower

standards. My Department is working with local authorities to raise standards across the private rented sector, to protect vulnerable tenants, including those living in HMOs.

■ Newton Europe

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[1860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) value of the contracts that Newton Europe has won to provide services for Northamptonshire county council since Mr Tony McArdle was appointed as commissioner; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

Like all local authorities, Northamptonshire County Council is independent of central government and therefore this information is not held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Claudia Webbe:

[\[18883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on regional disparities of the proposed move to 100 per cent business rate retention.

Luke Hall:

The Government is continuing to work with the sector on the aim to increase retention of locally retained business rates from 50 per cent to 75 per cent from April 2021. The current Local Government Finance system has measures in place to ensure that funds are distributed according to assessed relative needs. Ensuring that the system continues to provide incentives for local growth, while ensuring funding appropriately matches spending needs, is an important objective for the Government.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Leicester

Claudia Webbe:

[\[18884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with local authority leaders on the effect on Leicester City Council's budget of (a) the 75 per cent business rate retention pilot and (b) 100 per cent business rate retention.

Luke Hall:

Local authorities taking part in the 2019-20 one year business rates retention pilot programme retain an additional level of growth in business rates compared to other authorities. These areas have flexibility over how they spend this additional income. These pilot areas have provided us with useful information which will help inform the future direction of business rates retention reform. There will be no further pilots in 2020-21.

The Government is continuing to work with the sector on the aim to increase retention of locally retained business rates from 50 per cent to 75 per cent from April 2021. This would give local authorities greater control over locally raised taxes. We are continuing to work collaboratively with the local government sector on the future direction of reform.

■ Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[18604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for the coming into force of the provisions of the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019.

Luke Hall:

On 3 November 2019 we announced we were contracting with the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop the Code of Practice as a British Standard. Work with BSI commenced in December 2019, and they are now convening a group of key stakeholders, representing consumers and the industry, to write the Code. We have committed to developing the Parking Code of Practice this year. A public consultation will take place within six months, to give the parking industry, the public and other interested parties the opportunity to have a say. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ Parking: Fees and Charges

Stephen McPartland: [\[18674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to require surplus off-street parking revenue to be used in the same way as surplus on-street parking revenue.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Local authorities currently have strict controls over what they may spend any additional parking income on. Parking should be self-funding but local authorities must ensure that any surplus income from penalty charges (whether issued for on-street or off-street contraventions) plus any revenue from on-street parking fees and charges is used for legitimate purposes as prescribed in Section 55 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

■ Public Lavatories: Non-domestic Rates

Richard Fuller: [\[18506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals in respect of the non-domestic rating of public lavatories in Parliament 2019.

Luke Hall:

The Government recognises that public toilets are valuable community amenities. Primary legislation would be required to provide business rates relief for those public

toilets owned by principal local authorities and parish councils, as currently such bodies cannot have their rates bills reduced through reliefs. The Non-Domestic Rating (Lavatories) Bill, which would have enabled this, fell when the last Parliament was dissolved. The Government will consider reintroducing the measure in due course.

■ Religious Hatred: Islam

Naz Shah: [\[20509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release of 23 July 2019, when the additional independent adviser on Islamophobia will be appointed; and whether terms of reference will be provided for those advisers.

Luke Hall:

This Government remains committed to stamping out anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of hate crime. It is unacceptable for anyone to feel unsafe while practising their religion and we continue to take a zero-tolerance approach to Islamophobia.

The definition of Islamophobia proposed by the APPG is not in line with the Equality Act 2010 and could have consequences for freedom of speech. We recognise the importance of this matter and will interrogate it in further detail.

■ Sleeping Rough

Andrew Lewer: [\[2028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on additional funding to tackle rough sleeping in the next spending round.

Luke Hall:

Ministers and officials in my department have regular discussions with counterparts in HM Treasury on a range of issues, including rough sleeping.

The Government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head, which is why we have committed to end rough sleeping within this Parliament and to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.

In 2020/2021 we are providing £437 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This marks a £69 million increase in funding from the previous year.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[20469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to repeal the provisions relating to rough sleeping under the Vagrancy Act 1824.

Luke Hall:

The Government is clear that no-one should be criminalised simply for having nowhere to live and we are committed to reviewing the Vagrancy Act.

This is a complex issue and we know from our engagement with stakeholders that there are diverging views about the necessity and relevance of the Vagrancy Act. That is why the Government believes that a review, rather than wholesale immediate repeal, is the right course of action and we are looking at all options including retention, repeal, replacement or amendment.

At the heart of the review will be the experiences and perceptions of a range of relevant stakeholders including the homelessness sector, the police, local authorities, business representatives, community groups and individuals with lived experience.

■ Social Services

Kate Hollern: [\[1258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of local authorities to deliver their statutory duties for adult social care.

Luke Hall:

The Department of Health and Social Care lead the Government's relationship with local authorities for adult social care, including understanding how they may be meeting their adult social care responsibilities. In recognition of the pressures councils are facing in the area of social care, the Government have given councils access to an additional £1.5 billion of funding for social care in 2020-21.

■ Social Services: Leicester

Claudia Webbe: [\[18885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to meet the demand for social care in Leicester.

Luke Hall:

The Government has recognised and responded to the pressures local authorities are facing on social care and other frontline services: the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020-21 gives them access to the largest year-on-year increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) for almost a decade, an estimated 4.4 per cent real terms increase. This includes an additional £1 billion in grant funding for adult and children's social care, £10 million of which has been allocated to Leicester City Council. This is on top of the continuation of existing social care grant funding, and the 2 per cent Adult Social Care precept which will enable councils to access a further £500 million. Longer term funding decisions will be made at the next Spending Review.

■ Social Services: Northamptonshire

Ms Karen Buck: [\[1861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many tenders were received for the contract put out on 9 December 2019 to transform adult care services in Northamptonshire.

Luke Hall:

Northamptonshire County Council considered two tenders.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Children

Apsana Begum:

[18957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the number of children in temporary accommodation in (a) Poplar and Limehouse constituency, (b) London and (c) the UK since 2010.

Luke Hall:

The number of children in temporary accommodation in London can be found in the published live tables on homelessness: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>.

Statistics from April 2018 onward can be found in tab TA1 of the Detailed local authority level tables. Statistics between 2010 to March 2018 can be found under discontinued tables in Section 6 of the Detailed local authority level responses.

The data we collect is for all local authorities in England. We do not collect information on constituency level data or data for the rest of the UK.

In December 2019 we announced the allocation of £263 million in funding for 2020/21 to local authorities designed to support them to deliver services to tackle homelessness. The purpose of this funding is to give local authorities more control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who at risk of homelessness, including providing them with temporary accommodation.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Anneliese Dodds:

[18988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it remains the Government's policy to hold a public consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Anneliese Dodds:

[18989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe will be for the allocation of funding for disadvantaged people under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has committed to create the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as the successor to EU structural funds, including the European Social Fund. The fund will bind together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations.

The Government recognises the importance of reassuring local areas on the future of local growth funding now we have left the European Union, and of providing clarity on

the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Government officials have been working closely with key partners on the design and priorities of the fund, including through a series of engagement events attended by over 500 stakeholders from across a variety of sectors. Government looks forward to continuing to work closely with partners as we develop the fund and has been clear that final decisions on the design must take place after a cross-government Spending Review.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: North East

Chi Onwurah: [\[20487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 598, on European Regional Development Fund: North East, if he will provide details of the amount of funding available to the North East from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; and what criteria is used to determine the regional distribution of that funding.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Government has committed to creating a UK Shared Prosperity Fund to succeed European structural funds, including the European Regional Development Fund. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will bind together the whole of the UK, tackling inequality and deprivation across our four nations, including the North East of England.

Final decisions will be taken after a cross-Governmental Spending Review. In the meantime, officials have been working closely with interested parties whilst developing the fund, including a stakeholder event in Gateshead.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ CDC: Offshore Funds

Tulip Siddiq: [\[18672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he takes to monitor the proportion of CDC Group's investments held offshore or in offshore entities; and what the value was of CDC's offshore investments at 31 March 2019.

James Duddridge:

CDC invests in accordance with its policy on the payment of taxes and the use of offshore financial centres which is available on CDCs website. Under this policy, which has been agreed with DFID and is reviewed annually, CDC's preference is to invest directly into the country in which the investee company's business operations are located. Where CDC does use an offshore financial centre, it only uses those that are compliant with international tax transparency standards, as monitored by the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Tax information.

As of 31st March 2019, 25% of CDC's investments are held in CDC investment companies not domiciled in the UK.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[18673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what reviews he has undertaken on the adequacy of CDC's controls on the use of offshore accounts and investments by CDC management and senior staff in the last two years.

James Duddridge:

CDC reviews its tax policy at least annually with a view to remaining consistent with evolving international standards and the best practice of multilateral and bilateral development finance institutions. This policy is regularly reviewed by DFID.

■ Developing Countries: Human Trafficking

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 8428, if her Department will take steps to collect data on the trafficking of adolescent girls.

James Cleverly:

The UK uses the best available data to tackle trafficking and modern slavery, including of adolescent girls. Sources include the International Organization for Migration's database of human trafficking cases (available online through the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's data on trafficking in persons (available through the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons).

DFID works with our delivery partners to ensure women and girls are protected from abuse during crises. To ensure we have the best possible evidence to achieve this, we require delivery partners to use sex and age disaggregated data in their reporting.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[18685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 8428, how many adolescent girls were supported by the £12 million UK Aid Connect Programme from 2018 to 2022.

James Cleverly:

The UK Aid Connect programme "Effective Approaches to End Worst Forms of Child Labour", led by World Vision, will enable boys and girls to enjoy their rights to be protected from the worst forms of child labour in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia. The programme started in 2018 and by 2022, more than 24,000 people will benefit directly of which about 14,500 are children including roughly 7,000 boys and 7,500 girls.

■ Greece: Migrant Camps

Ronnie Cowan: [\[18666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what funding her Department has provided for refugees at Camp Moria, Lesbos.

James Cleverly:

The UK has a strong relationship with Greece on our shared migration objectives. We continue to offer support to the Greek Government to alleviate the pressures on the islands and deliver sustainable improvements within the Greek migration system.

This includes, until the end of March 2020, deployment of interpreters to the Reception and Identification Service on the Greek islands to support the processing of migrants and the identification of those most vulnerable. Our large-scale humanitarian programming ended in 2017 when the Greek Government took over the humanitarian response, with €1.3 billion of EU funds made available. The UK recently agreed an additional contribution of £510,000 to provide urgently needed humanitarian goods for migrants in Greece this winter.

■ Nigeria: Education

Preet Kaur Gill:

[18781]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of the £83.0 million allocated to the Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria will be spent on supporting the (a) state and (b) the private sector.

James Duddridge:

Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria targets 54% of funds to support state systems to enable more focused teaching and learning, more efficient and effective use of resources to support foundational skills and a greater focus on achieving results.

6% of the programme's funds will be used to support improved non-state systems, including low cost private education.

The remaining 40% of the programme will support community engagement on education, education in emergencies and research and evidence.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[18782]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Partnership for Learning for All in Nigerian Education programme benefits the most marginalised (a) communities and (b) children.

James Duddridge:

The programme will work to improve the quality of teaching and learning of foundational basic skills for marginalised children, including children affected by conflict, rural girls and children living with disabilities.

The programme will support communities to enhance the participation of marginalised children, drawing on approaches such as promoting community education initiatives and by addressing harmful social and cultural practices that limit opportunities for marginalised girls and children living with disabilities.

■ Palestinians: Schools

Alicia Kearns:

[\[19999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress her Department has made with the Georg Eckert Institute on the review of the textbooks included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum; and if she will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

Following the UK's calls for international action, an EU sponsored independent review of Palestinian textbooks is currently underway. The EU has contracted the Georg Eckert Institute, a specialist textbook analysis centre, to lead this review.

To ensure the review could begin immediately on the signing of the contract, the UK commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute to produce an inception report to establish its methodology in advance.

We understand from the EU that an interim report covering grade 8 – 10 books will be completed in Spring 2020, with the full report covering all the books due later in the year. DFID is part of the steering committee for this review, and we will continue to engage with the EU to press for this timetable to be met.

■ Syria: Humanitarian Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[19932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent steps she has taken to provide humanitarian support to displaced people in Syria.

James Cleverly:

We are gravely concerned about escalating regime and Russian military action and its humanitarian impact in North West Syria, where more than 948,000 people have been displaced since 1 December, of which 80% are women and children. Many of these people have been displaced multiple times and many more are at risk of imminent further displacement.

In response to increased needs, this financial year DFID has allocated £118 million to organisations delivering aid cross border primarily into North West Syria. This has helped to provide hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people with food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare including psychosocial support. We have provided funding to response partners including the UN to preposition essential supplies to support innocent families and civilians displaced by conflict, and are supporting all our partners to respond to this humanitarian crisis.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[20051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what Official Development Assistance is being provided by the Government to (a) Idlib and (b) Syria.

James Cleverly:

The UK has committed over £3.1 billion since 2012 in response to the Syria Crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. Since 2012, across Syria and the region, we have provided over 28 million food rations, over 18 million medical consultations, and over 12 million vaccines. Our aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrians, supporting refugees to remain in countries in the region, and enabling their host communities to accommodate them.

We do not calculate our spend by region, as our funding is allocated to partners operating from multiple crossing points. However, in financial year 2019/20, DFID has allocated £118 million to projects implemented by organisations delivering cross-border aid, primarily into North West Syria, including into Idlib. This has helped to provide hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people with food, clean water, shelter and healthcare, including mental health support.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agriculture: Expert Trade Advisory Groups

Ben Lake:

[\[21360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 744 on Agriculture: Expert Trade Advisory Groups, when the Agri Food Expert Trade Advisory Group last met.

Conor Burns:

The Agri Food Expert Trade Advisory Group is one of the formal engagement mechanisms to allow stakeholders the opportunity to feed into trade policy, ensuring the UK position is well-informed and reflects the interests of the whole of the UK. The Group meets regularly and last met on Wednesday 12 February 2020.

■ Business: Cuba

Gareth Thomas:

[\[18500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) British and (b) European businesses who have not received payment (a) six, (b) 12 and (c) 24 months after the completion of their contracts in Cuba; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

DIT Havana are aware of 5 UK companies who have not been paid. The team is working with all parties to address payments issues. We do not hold information on European businesses.

■ Diesel Vehicles: Exports

Jonathan Edwards: [\[20442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many second-hand diesel cars were exported from the UK in 2019.

Graham Stuart:

Statistics are not available for the number of second-hand diesel cars exported from the UK in 2019. However, the value of those exports in 2019 was £278 million.

■ Exports: India

Gareth Thomas: [\[21132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what sector-specific steps she is taking to increase the export of UK goods and services to India; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

As outlined by the South Asia regional trade plan, the department connects UK businesses to buyers using sector-specific expertise both in the UK and our overseas network, including experts across our nine teams within our Deputy and High Commissions in India. The team covers all priority sectors, including healthcare and life sciences, digital technology, infrastructure, energy and financial and professional services. Through the UK-India Joint Working Group we are also addressing market access barriers to increase sectoral trade in food and drink, ICT, life sciences, chemicals and services.

■ Fairtrade Foundation

Tulip Siddiq: [\[18824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many times she has met representatives of Fairtrade since July 2019.

Graham Stuart:

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has not met with Fairtrade representatives in the period from July 2019 to the present.

■ Overseas Companies: India

Gareth Thomas: [\[21133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much funding she has allocated to supporting UK businesses in India; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

The department's budget for the South Asia Network, for the financial year 2019/20, is £4.4 m for staff and non-pay expenditure. There is no specific budget for India.

Wider DIT budgets, which are not set at a regional level, also support the delivery of trade.

■ Renewable Energy: Exports

Barry Gardiner: [\[20376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to identify potential export markets for UK renewables; and which countries have been identified for future trade missions with representatives from the renewables industry.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade works with UK suppliers, foreign Governments, sector focussed trade associations and procuring authorities to identify potential export markets for the renewable energy sectors. Understanding the UK's capability and matching it with relevant high value export opportunities overseas forms part of the work of our renewable energy sector team.

The Department is currently organising a trade mission to Indonesia in late March, focusing on the waste sector. The programme of activity for the next financial year has not yet been finalised and it will be coordinated alongside the programme for the 26th Conference of Parties.

■ Trade Agreements: Biodiversity and Climate Change

Deidre Brock: [\[20512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to incorporate into her trade negotiations the UK's priorities on promoting nature-based solutions at the UNFCCC COP26 and the Convention on Biological Diversity COP.

Conor Burns:

We're clear that more trade doesn't have to come at the expense of the environment. We are exploring all options in the design of future trade and investment agreements, including possible environmental provisions.

We are committed to upholding the UK's high environmental standards and will consider the full range of mechanisms available to us.

The Department is considering ways to maximise trade and investment opportunities in clean growth sectors during, and in the run up to, COP26.

The UK is also seeking an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to spur global action, recognising the important role of nature-based solutions.

■ Trade Agreements: Brazil

Andrew Rosindell: [\[20416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions her Department has had with representatives of the Brazilian Government on a bilateral trade deal with that country.

Conor Burns:

The UK Government places great value on Brazil as an important trading partner. At the end of Q3 2019, UK-Brazil trade was up 11.2%, or £656m, from the four quarters to the end of Q3 2018. We seek to deepen our trading relationship through dialogues such as the Joint Economic and Trade Committee and the Economic and Financial Dialogue. Brazil, along with Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina, is part of the Mercosur trading bloc. The EU and Mercosur reached political agreement on a Free Trade Agreement last June. I visited Brazil in August 2019, and we look forward to further discussions with Mercosur partners the best way forward for UK-Mercosur trade relations.

■ Trade Agreements: India

Gareth Thomas:

[\[21131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will open negotiations with her Indian counterpart on a UK-India free trade agreement; and if she will make a statement.

Conor Burns:

We are not yet negotiating a free trade agreement with India, but we are in discussion about how to develop a deeper trade relationship. India is a key trading partner to the UK, with total bilateral trade rising by 6.4% to £22.5bn in the year to end of Q3 2019. We are committed to increasing trade and opening markets, including through the annual Secretary of State led Joint Economic and Trade Committee. [The latest statement can be found here.](#)

■ UK Export Finance: Environment Protection

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[18399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February to Question 14007 on UK Export Finance: Fossil Fuels, what the (a) annual budget of and (b) number of full-time equivalent staff in the UK Export Finance Environmental, Social and Human Rights team was in each of the last five years.

Graham Stuart:

The numbers of full-time equivalent members of staff in the environmental, social and human rights team at the end of each of the last four years, and on 28 February 2020, were as follows:

	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STAFF IN POST
28 February 2020	6
31 March 2019	7
31 March 2018	4
31 March 2017	4

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STAFF IN POST

31 March 2016	4
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The annual budget for the team for the last five years was as follows:

A) YEAR	B) TEAM BUDGET (EXCLUDING SALARY COSTS IN COLUMN (C))	C) MEAN SALARY COSTINGS, GROSSED FOR TAX, NI AND PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS [1]
2019/20	£ 100,000	£ 445,691.40
2018/19	£ 50,000	£ 477,055.60
2017/18	£ 150,000	£ 294,106.40
2016/17	£ 150,000	£ 274,666.00
2015/16	£ 150,000	£ 284,144.00

[1] The figures quoted are the median grade salaries for the numbers of each member of UKEF staff in post on the ESHR Team at the end of each financial year, 'grossed up' to account for tax, national insurance contributions and pension contributions.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[18402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 14007 on UK Export Finance: Fossil Fuels, how many meetings officials in the UK Export Finance Environmental, Social and Human Rights team have held with representatives from the (a) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) Committee on Climate Change in each of the last five years.

Graham Stuart:

Representatives from across UK Export Finance (UKEF), regularly meet officials from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to discuss strategic, operational and specific project-related matters. This includes issues relating to climate concerns, fossil fuels and the transition away from fossil fuels.

As the Committee for Climate Change has a domestic focus, UKEF has not engaged with it.

■ UK Export Finance: Fossil Fuels

Tulip Siddiq: [\[18400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to reduce the number of oil and gas projects supported through UK Export Finance; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) helps UK companies of all sizes and across all sectors to win, fulfil and receive payment for export contracts.

The UK's oil and gas sector is a vital part of the UK's economy, supporting around 300,000 jobs. UKEF's support has helped to sustain UK jobs in a sector that has seen low investment due to fluctuating and reduced oil prices, but remains vital to the UK's energy security.

Many businesses in the oil and gas industry are actively engaging with the transition to a low carbon economy, applying world-leading skills and expertise to offshore wind development. UKEF is well placed to support companies through this transition to a low carbon economy.

■ UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee

Gareth Thomas: [\[21136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many times the Joint Economic Trade Committee has met in each year since 2005; and if she will make a statement.

Conor Burns:

Since 2005, we have successfully conducted 13 UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committees, to help boost bilateral trade and investment between the UK and India.

The next annual dialogue is due to take place later this year.

■ World Trade Organisation

Barry Gardiner: [\[20373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of potential (a) challenges in the negotiations on the UK's proposed schedules at the WTO and (b) amendments, financial settlements or other compensatory measures that may be required as a result of those negotiations.

Greg Hands:

The independent UK goods and services schedules aim to maintain the existing commitments and the balance of rights and obligations between the UK and our trading partners. The UK has formally opened negotiations under Article XXVIII (GATT) on aspects of our goods schedule. We continue to assess the impacts as we seek to conclude negotiations. The appropriate WTO certification procedure for the UK services schedule does not allow for market access or compensation negotiations. We continue to consult with the Russian Federation to see their outstanding objection to technical elements withdrawn. A WTO member can trade on an uncertified schedule whilst working to have its schedule certified.

Barry Gardiner: [\[20375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress the UK is making in submitting schedules at the WTO.

Greg Hands:

The UK has submitted independent goods and services schedules to the WTO for certification. The UK's independent goods schedule was circulated on 24 July 2018, and we have now formally opened negotiations under Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The UK's independent services schedule was circulated in December 2018. There is an outstanding objection to the technical elements from the Russian Federation, and we continue to consult with them to see their objection withdrawn. A WTO member can trade on an uncertified schedule, whilst working to have its schedule certified.

■ World Trade Organisation: Appeals

Barry Gardiner: [\[20372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications for the Government's policies of the multi-party interim appeal arrangement entered into by the EU and 16 other WTO members to settle appeal proceedings in the absence of a functioning WTO appellate body; and what plans the Government has to participate in that arrangement.

Greg Hands:

The UK remains a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system and the World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement system. A fully-functioning, compulsory, binding, and impartial dispute settlement system with an appeal function is important in providing certainty and stability to the WTO system. The UK notes that some WTO Members are now considering multi-party interim appeal arrangements as a contingency measure whilst the Appellate Body is inquorate. The final proposal for such an interim arrangement has not yet been published, and we will continue to follow developments on this closely.

JUSTICE

■ Age of Criminal Responsibility

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[18586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to raise the age of criminal responsibility.

Lucy Frazer:

We do not have any plans to change the age of criminal responsibility.

■ Bill of Rights

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will consider introducing a British bill of rights.

Alex Chalk:

We made a commitment in our manifesto to update the Human Rights Act 1998 and administrative law to ensure that there is a proper balance between the rights of individuals, our national security and effective government. We are now considering how best to do this, and have no current plans to introduce a British Bill of Rights.

■ Business: Fraud

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[21325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish the results of his call for evidence on corporate liability reform for economic crime.

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.

■ Children: Maintenance

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[20389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of waiting times for Child Maintenance Service appeals in (a) Wallasey, (b) Merseyside and (c) the North West.

Chris Philp:

General information about waiting times for appeals in the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) is published at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

The table below shows the average waiting time - in weeks - for Child Maintenance appeals between July and September 2019 (the latest period for which data are available).

LIVERPOOL[1]	MERSEYSIDE[2]	NORTH WEST[3]
29	28	35

CLEARANCE TIME INCLUDES APPEALS CLEARED WITH AND WITHOUT A TRIBUNAL HEARING

¹ Liverpool venue (where Child Maintenance Service appeals for the Wallasey area are heard)

² Merseyside - Includes Birkenhead, Liverpool and St Helens SSCS venues

³ North West SSCS region

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and are the best data that are available.

CLEARANCE TIME INCLUDES APPEALS CLEARED WITH AND WITHOUT A TRIBUNAL HEARING

The data may differ slightly to that of the published statistics as these data were run on a different date.

Waiting times are calculated from receipt of an appeal to its final disposal. An appeal is not necessarily disposed of at its first hearing. The final disposal decision on the appeal may be reached after an earlier hearing had been adjourned (which may be directed by the judge for a variety of reasons, such as to seek further evidence), or after an earlier hearing date had been postponed (again, for a variety of reasons, often at the request of the appellant). An appeal may also have been decided at an earlier date by the First-tier Tribunal, only for the case to have gone on to the Upper Tribunal, to be returned once again to the First-tier, for its final disposal.

■ Domestic Abuse: Children

Munira Wilson: [\[18918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendations of the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill in its First Report of Session 2017–19, whether he plans to undertake a review on how to address domestic abuse in relationships between under-16 year olds.

Alex Chalk:

We will publish our response to the remaining Joint Committee recommendations on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, including on whether to undertake a review on how to address domestic abuse in relationships between under-16 year olds, when the Bill is re-introduced. As the Leader of the House of Commons has indicated, we expect this to be ahead of the Easter recess.

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on children and young people. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation can impact their health, wellbeing and development, with lasting effects into adulthood. That is why the government has provided £8m over the last two years for services designed to support children affected by domestic abuse, be it perpetrated by parents/guardians or children they're in a relationship with.

We are fully committed to enacting the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill to transform the response to domestic abuse. A key aim of the Bill is to raise awareness of the impact that domestic abuse can have on children and to ensure they are considered victims in their own right.

■ Employment Appeal Tribunal

Anneliese Dodds: [\[21315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average wait time is between an appeal being lodged at the Employment Appeals Tribunal to that appeal being heard.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not hold published information on the average time between an appeal being lodged at the Employment Appeal Tribunal and that appeal being heard.

Internal Management Information held works to a target of 75% of appeal cases heard within 26 weeks of appeal registration. Registration differs to lodgement as when an appeal is received/lodged with the Employment Appeal Tribunal, it will be assessed by a member of the Judiciary prior to any registration.

Latest performance indicates that between April 2019 and September 2019, 77% of Employment Appeal Tribunals were heard within 26 weeks of registration. This is internal management information only and the data is provisional and subject to further change.

■ Homicide: Sexual Offences

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[21124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women have been killed by men who claim rough sex as a defence to murder, in each of the last five years in England and Wales.

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[21125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to ensure that it is a requirement of the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner to record information on the number of women killed by men who claim rough sex as a defence to murder in England and Wales.

Alex Chalk:

The law states that a victim is unable to consent to actual bodily harm or other serious injury, including death. Defendants who claim consent to such activity remain liable to prosecution.

The Ministry of Justice collects information on defendants that are prosecuted and convicted of specific criminal offences in England and Wales (i.e. murder, manslaughter, etc) in any given year. Information is not collated on whether a prosecution or conviction relied on a defendant's claim in their defence, that death had resulted from rough sex gone wrong. This may be a matter of court record but such information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Under the provisions of the Domestic Abuse Bill, the general functions of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner will include encouraging good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of offences involving domestic abuse. Specified public authorities, including chief officers of police and the Crown Prosecution Service, will be under a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner where it is reasonably practical to do so. The duty to cooperate could include, for example, responding to requests for information from the Commissioner. As an independent

office holder, it will be for the Commissioner to determine how best to discharge her functions and exercise her powers.”

■ Humanism: Marriage

Bambos Charalambous: [18961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on couples wishing to have a humanist wedding of the requirement to also have a civil ceremony in order for their marriage to be lawfully recognised.

Alex Chalk:

Government consulted in 2014 on marriages by non-religious belief organisations. Its summary assessment of costs and benefits was published in the response, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/marriages-by-non-religious-belief-organisations>.

■ Offenders: Gender

Philip Davies: [18568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the custody rate was (a) in total and (b) by sex of the offender for each category of offence in each of the last three years.

Chris Philp:

Information up to December 2018 on sentencing outcomes relating to specific offence categories is published in the “Outcomes by offence data tool” at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2018>.

To obtain the total custody rate for each offence group:

- In the Pivot Table Fields, drag ‘Offence group’ to the Rows field.
- The total custody rate can then be found by dividing ‘Total Immediate Custody’ (rows 206 – 218) by ‘Sentenced’ (rows 66 - 78) for each offence group.

To obtain the custody rate by sex of the offender:

- In the Pivot Table Fields, drag ‘Sex’ to the Rows field above the recently inserted ‘Offence group’.
- The custody rate by sex of the offender for each category of offence can then be found by dividing ‘Total Immediate Custody’ (rows 714 - 764) by ‘Sentenced’ (rows 184 - 234) for each offence group and corresponding sex.

Philip Davies: [18569]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average custodial sentence length was (a) in total and (b) by sex of the offender for each category of offence in each of the last three years.

Chris Philp:

Information up to December 2018 on sentencing outcomes relating to specific offence categories is published in the "Outcomes by offence data tool" at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2018>

To obtain the average custodial sentence length for each offence group:

- In the Pivot Table Fields, drag 'Offence group' to the Rows field.
- The average custodial sentence length can then be found in rows 472 - 484.

To obtain the average custodial sentence length by sex of the offender for each offence group:

- In the Pivot Table Fields, drag 'Sex' to the Rows field above the recently inserted 'Offence group'.

The average custodial sentence length by sex of the offender for each category of offence can then be found in rows 1721 – 1771 for each offence group and corresponding sex.

■ Prison Officers: Convictions

Philip Davies:

[18567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) male and (b) female prison officers were convicted of an offence as a result of having a relationship with a prisoner in each of the last five years.

Lucy Frazer:

Data relating to how many (a) male and (b) female prison officers were convicted of an offence as a result of having a relationship with a prisoner is not held centrally.

This is because Misconduct in Public Office (MIPO) offences are not broken down into this category

■ Prison Sentences

Philip Davies:

[18570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average amount of time served of a sentence of imprisonment was (a) in total and (b) by (i) male and (ii) female offenders for (A) violence against the person offences and (B) each other category of offence in each of the last three years.

Lucy Frazer:

The table attached gives the mean and median average period spent in custody by males and females released from determinate sentences of imprisonment between 2016 and 2018, by category of the main offence for which they were serving the sentence.

Sentencing is entirely a matter for our independent courts. When deciding what sentence to impose the courts take into account the circumstances of the offence and

any mitigating and aggravating factors, in line with the sentencing guidelines – which are issued by the independent Sentencing Council. The sentencing framework and sentencing guidelines apply equally to all offenders.

Men tend to serve longer in prison and there are a number of factors which help to explain why this is. Principally, men tend to be convicted of more serious offending which attracts longer custodial sentences, including extended determinate sentences, where release is at the two thirds point of the sentence rather than half way. This in turn means that women are more likely to be eligible for early release under the home detention curfew (HDC) scheme, which allows release up to 135 days before the halfway point of the sentence and is limited to offenders sentenced to less than four years. Those serving extended determinate sentences are excluded. In addition, the data in these tables also includes time served following recall to prison from licenced supervision. Recalled men tend to be serving longer sentences (12 months or more) and will generally serve longer after recall than recalled women, who tend to be serving less than 12 months.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ 18570.xlsx]

■ Prison Sentences: Terrorism

Philip Davies: [\[18572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time served in prison was for people sentenced to immediate custodial sentences for terrorist offences in each of the last 10 years.

Philip Davies: [\[18573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of the prison sentence handed down by courts was served in prison by each offender convicted of a terrorist related offence in each of the last 10 years.

Lucy Frazer:

Keeping the public safe is this Government's first priority – which is why we have brought forward emergency legislation that will ensure no terror offender is released before the end of their sentence without a through risk assessment by the Parole Board.

We do not hold centrally the information requested for terrorism-related offenders. However, we are able to provide data based on those serving in prison for a 'terror legislation' offence. Please find below a table showing this information:

Table 1: Average sentence lengths, average time served (inc. remand; in months), and proportion of sentence served in prison for those with a 'terror legislation'(1) offence; prisoner releases from determinate sentences from 2009 to 2018

(MEAN;**MONTHS)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 ⁽²⁾	2015	2016	2017	2018
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Average (mean) sentence length	43.7	75.3	92.6	120.0	67.9	67.5	96.0	20.9	29.0	30.2	43.4
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Average (mean) time served (inc. remand)	23.0	36.3	46.6	69.0	35.1	33.7	48.0	11.6	19.6	16.9	22.7
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% of sentence served in prison ⁽³⁾	53%	48%	50%	57%	52%	50%	50%	55%	68%	56%	52%
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(MEDIAN;**MONTHS)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 ⁽²⁾	2015	2016	2017	2018
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Average (median) sentence length	48.0	59.0	84.0	120.0	81.0	67.5	96.0	11.5	16.5	20.5	36.0
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Average (median) time served (inc. remand)	24.0	42.0	42.0	69.0	27.4	33.7	48.0	7.5	9.7	11.3	17.9
--	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	-----	-----	------	------

% of sentence served in prison ⁽³⁾	50%	71%	50%	57%	34%	50%	50%	65%	59%	55%	50%
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Notes

(1) For data from 2009 to 2015, the prison releases of offenders with a corresponding 'PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT' offence have been included. For data from 2015 onwards, the prison releases of offenders with a corresponding offence under a piece of terrorism legislation have been included. The effect of this difference is that in the pre-2015 data, the "PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT" included a smaller range of the most serious terrorism offences (which is reflected in the higher average sentence length figures for pre-2015 years in the table above), and other terrorism offences would have likely been recorded as other offences.

(2) In 2015 we made significant changes to our data source and processing. Following these changes, we are able to extract much more detailed offence information. Data for 2015 has been presented twice in the above table, one using the 'old data' processing and once under the 'new data' processing - this has been done to provide an indication of the magnitude of the break in series.

(3) Whilst the majority of determinate sentenced prisoners are released at their sentence half-way point, there are a number of reasons why someone may be released before this point. One of which is the Early Removal Scheme (ERS) for Foreign Nationals – whereby an offender can be released up to 270 days before their sentence half-way point for the purpose of deportation or removal from the UK.

Data sources and quality

The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Source: PQs 18572 & 18573 (Ministry of Justice; DASD-JSAS)

■ Probate

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[20370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department last made an assessment of the efficiency of the dispatch of probate; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

Her Majesty Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) constantly monitor and review performance on the processing of probate applications. From April 2019 to September 2019, there was a temporary increase in waiting times which was caused by a combination of an increased volume of incoming work and the transition to a new case management system. The move to the new system meant that staff had to spend time being trained and familiarising themselves with it. There were also some initial performance issues which have now been resolved.

Official statistics are not published on the average length of time from receipt of the application to the issue of a grant of probate. Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) internal management information, which is not subject to the

rigorous quality assurance processes of official statistics, has been used to show average times from receipt of an application to a grant being issued in January 2020.

MEASURE	AVERAGE WEEKS TO ISSUED	MEDIAN TO ISSUE
Submission to issue for all grants issued in the month (including those stopped for queries or missing documentation)	7	5
From submission to issue for grants issued in the month that were not stopped.	5	4

These figures include applications made via the online service and uses the receipt date of the digital application for recording the time of issue, rather than the time the necessary supporting documentation is sent to HMCTS in order to start processing the application. The data has been extracted from the HMCTS Reform Core Case Data system, which is a new system in active development, and may not be directly comparable with figures for earlier periods.

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

Rachel Reeves: [\[20467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps with the Home Secretary to include a joint inspection of the CPS and police in the Government's review of the criminal justice system handling of rape cases.

Kit Malthouse:

The decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being charged and prosecuted in England and Wales is a cause for concern. We are determined to do everything we can to ensure these appalling crimes are tackled effectively and victims are supported.

A joint inspection between HMCPSP and HMICFRS into the handling of rape cases by the Police and CPS is currently being planned.

■ Reece Dempster

Philip Davies: [\[18566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the previous offences by (a) date, (b) category and (c) disposal of each offence committed by Reece Dempster who was sentenced at the Old Bailey on 6 February 2020.

Chris Philp:

As is consistent with established procedure, we do not intend to publish the previous offences. An application for disclosure may be made to the relevant court under Part 5.8 Criminal Procedure Rules 2015 as amended.

■ Rehabilitation: Terrorism

Zarah Sultana:

[\[18871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to rehabilitate prisoners convicted of terrorism offences; and which (a) organisations and (b) individuals provide rehabilitation programmes to prisoners convicted of terrorism offences.

Lucy Frazer:

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) use tailored interventions with offenders - psychological, ideological and theological - to support their disengagement and rehabilitation.

We continue to regularly review Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) intervention programmes to ensure they are informed by the most up to date research on correctional rehabilitation. Interventions are delivered by in-house HMPPS CT specialists or through a range of external providers. We are unable to disclose further information regarding external providers as we are concerned about the adverse impact disclosure will have on national security.

More widely, we have trained over 29,000 prison staff to recognise, report and challenge extremist behaviour in prison. HMPPS works closely with partners, including with law enforcement, to understand and manage the risks that terrorist offenders present in prison, using a range of control and rehabilitation measures. This is underpinned by a specialist counter terrorism case management process, which is led by HMPPS Counter Terrorism specialists.

■ Shoplifting

Gareth Thomas:

[\[18480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of section 22A of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980.

Chris Philp:

Section 176 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 inserted Section 22A into the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980. Under this provision, shoplifting of goods worth £200 or less is treated as a summary only offence, unless the defendant elects to be tried in the Crown Court. These cases can now be handled as police-led prosecutions.

Police-led prosecutions were introduced to provide a simpler and more proportionate response to high-volume, low-level offences where the case is uncontested, increasing police discretion to tackle crime in their area, freeing up CPS resource to focus on more complex cases, and generating efficiencies in the criminal justice

system. The Ministry of Justice does not maintain statistics on police-led prosecutions.

■ Social Security and Child Support Tribunal

Marion Fellows:

[\[18859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many hearings of the (a) first tier and (b) upper tier Social Security and Child Support Tribunals were adjourned in each of the last five years, and for what reasons those hearings were adjourned.

Marion Fellows:

[\[18860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many hearings of the (a) first tier and (b) upper tier Social Security and Child Support Tribunals were adjourned due to the appellant not receiving their appeal bundle in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

(1) (a) Data about adjournments for appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS), are published annually, in June, at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics. The table below contains a breakdown of the reasons for adjournments.

NUMBER AND REASONS¹ FOR ADJOURNMENTS IN FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL (SOCIAL SECURITY AND CHILD SUPPORT) HEARINGS

	Financial Years – April to March				
	2014_2015	2015_2016	2016_2017	2017_2018	2018_2019
Adjournment reason/category					
1st Tier Not Ready to Proceed	291	165	~	~	0
Adjourned, All Elements Adjourned	0	0	~	~	0
Adjourned, Element(s) Outstanding	0	0	0	~	~
Admin Not Ready to Proceed	1,119	629	17	38	15
Appellant Not Ready to	5,507	3,760	63	46	31

NUMBER AND REASONS¹ FOR ADJOURNMENTS IN FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL (SOCIAL SECURITY AND CHILD SUPPORT) HEARINGS

Proceed

Appellant to attend - oral hearing requested - did not attend - no reason	0	316	1,041	1,276	1,785
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Appellant to attend - oral hearing requested - did not attend - reason given	0	1,109	3,297	3,319	3,594
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Appellant to attend - paper requested or no Enquiry Form returned	0	487	1,828	2,307	2,638
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Documents supplied but not before the Tribunal at the hearing	0	107	301	332	335
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Evidence or further Response from Respondent required	~	1,124	2,999	3,509	3,451
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Evidence or submission from Appellant required	5	720	2,113	2,159	2,147
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Further medical evidence essential	0	2,943	11,972	15,755	16,298
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Insufficient time to deal with case	0	384	1,320	1,324	1,217
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NUMBER AND REASONS¹ FOR ADJOURNMENTS IN FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL (SOCIAL SECURITY AND CHILD SUPPORT) HEARINGS

No Interpreter	0	316	1,236	989	1,186
Other administrative errors	0	240	927	1,203	1,226
Other reasons for adjourning	~	1,674	5,974	7,933	7,976
Part Allowed	0	0	~	~	0
Presenting Officer to attend	0	84	212	183	128
Respondent failed to comply with directions	0	46	120	80	51
Tribunal Not Ready to Proceed	20,468	14,161	563	426	278
Adjournments as a % of hearings listed ²	17%	17%	17%	18%	20%

¹ Prior to November 2015 there were four adjournment categories: First Tier Not Ready to Proceed; Admin Not Ready to Proceed; Appellant Not Ready to Proceed; and Tribunal Not Ready to Proceed. The additional categories as above were introduced from November 2015.

~ Equates to a value of fewer than five.

² Proportion of listed hearings for the totals are weighted averages.

The data may differ slightly to that of the published statistics where reports were run on a different date.

(1) (b) The data for the Upper Tribunal (Administrative Appeal Chamber) which hears appeals against decisions made by SSCS are not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

(2) (a) and (b) these data are not held centrally.

The decision to adjourn a hearing is a judicial function. The panel will only proceed when it is

satisfied it has all the evidence it needs to make a fair and just decision and that may

include further medical evidence.

■ Television: Licensing

Kevin Brennan: [20397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been imprisoned for failing to pay fines in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in (a) Wales and (b) England in each year since 2015.

Chris Philp:

The number of people admitted to prison for failing to pay fines in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in England and Wales in each year between 2015 and 2018 can be viewed in the attached table.

We have not produced the numbers each year in terms of the England and Wales split due to the small numbers involved which could result in the identification of an individual. However, between 2015 and 2018, one person was admitted to a prison in Wales for non-payment of the fine associated with using a TV without a licence – the remainder were admitted to prisons in England.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 20397 response table_dh.xlsx]

■ Trespass

Alicia Kearns: [20002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many instances of (a) trespass on land under section 61 and (b) aggravated trespass on land under section 68 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 have taken place in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

Prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes up to the year ending December 2018 are available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool', available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804510/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2018.xlsx

To identify prosecutions, convictions and sentences for the above offences, filter 'Offence code' by

(a) '12522' for trespass on land under section 61.

(b) '12533' for aggravated trespass on land under section 68 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

In each case, the number of individuals prosecuted, convicted and sentenced can be found in rows 31, 32, and 33, respectively.

■ Vagrancy Act 1824: Prosecutions

Layla Moran:

[20594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions have been made under the Vagrancy Act 1824 in (a) England and (b) Wales in each calendar year since 2015.

Alex Chalk:

Prosecutions, convictions and sentencing outcomes in England & Wales up to the year ending December 2018 are available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool', available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804510/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2018.xlsx

To identify prosecutions, convictions and sentences for offences under the Vagrancy act 1824, filter 'Offence code' by '10431', '13900', '18200', '18300', '18501', '18801', '18805'.

The number of individuals prosecuted and convicted for these offences can be found in the resulting pivot table in rows 31 and 32, respectively.

■ Young Offenders

Lee Anderson:

[18968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to reduce the number of behaviour management incidents in custody for young offenders.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of children in custody has declined by 70% over the past decade, leading to a concentrated cohort of children with particularly complex needs, most of whom are serving sentences for more serious or violent offences. The safety of all children and staff is paramount, so we have taken the following measures:

- Last year, the Youth Custody Service published, and began implementing, a new approach to behaviour management – “Building Bridges” – developed with the NHS.[1] This is based on the importance of leadership, trusting staff-child relationships and the benefits of reward, prevention and proactive techniques.
- We are funding all our frontline officers to undertake a youth justice qualification up to foundation degree level, which will enable them to better analyse need and risk, and deploy more effective interventions.
- We recruited more psychologists and healthcare workers to work with children to help them overcome the issues at the root of their poor behaviour. For those children with the most complex needs, we have created two specialist enhanced support units so they can receive the intensive support they need.
- We have commissioned a review of pain-inducing restraint techniques, which we expect to publish shortly, and set up a taskforce to review separation practice and policy.

We anticipate this range of new measures will lead to improved behaviour, fewer incidents and better outcomes for children.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-bridges-a-positive-behaviour-framework-for-the-children-and-young-people-secure-estate>

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Parades: Northern Ireland

Bridget Phillipson: [21250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of the work of the Parades Commission of Northern Ireland on normalising public processions.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Parades Commission continues to have the full support of the UK Government in fulfilling its role on the adjudication of Public Processions in Northern Ireland.

The Commission, which is the lawfully constituted body for making determinations on parading in Northern Ireland, operates independently of the Government in line with the provisions contained in the Public Processions (NI) Act 1998.

TRANSPORT

■ A1: Rutland

Sir Greg Knight: [20396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timetable is for the resurfacing of the A1 through Rutland; and when the road surfaces on that stretch of road were last inspected.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Highways England Inspectors travel the network to carry out weekly safety inspections of the A1. They last inspected the section through Rutland on 25 February 2020 and some carriageway defects were identified.

Any safety critical defects identified are reported with the appropriate instruction to mitigate any immediate safety issues. Permanent repairs are then carried out within a timescale appropriate to the severity and impact of the defect, frequently within 28 days.

The A1 is being considered for future renewal schemes as Highways England develops its forward programme of works for the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) period, covering the years 2020 to 2025.

We expect RIS2 to be published before the start of the second Road Period on 1 April 2020. Highways England will then publish its Delivery Plan for the period in response to RIS2.

■ Airports: National Policy Statements

Sarah Olney: [\[20542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to undertake a review of the Airports National Policy Statement under section 6 of the Planning Act 2008.

Kelly Tolhurst:

On 27 February 2020 the Court of Appeal ruled that, when designating the Airports National Policy Statement, the previous government did not take account of the Paris Agreement, non-CO₂ emissions and emissions post-2050. As part of its judgment, the Court has declared that the Airports National Policy Statement is of no legal effect unless and until the Government carries out a review under the Planning Act 2008.

The Government has taken the decision not to appeal the Court of Appeal's judgment.

The Court's judgment is complex and requires careful consideration. The Government will set out its next steps in due course.

Sarah Olney: [\[20543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what parties have written to his Department requesting a review of the airports national policy statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has received requests from six parties to review the Airports National Policy Statement. The requests have come from Plan B Earth, Heathrow Hub Limited, the Mayor of London, a joint request from five London Boroughs (the London Boroughs of Hillingdon, Richmond, Wandsworth, Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) with Greenpeace and two individuals.

■ Aviation: Noise

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[21123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the the level of aircraft noise sleep disturbance impact in Camberwell and Peckham constituency; and what progress he has made on limiting or reducing the number of people significantly affected by aircraft noise at night.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has not made any assessment of the level of aircraft noise sleep disturbance impact in Camberwell and Peckham constituency. The Government limits night flights at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted and will be consulting later this year on the regime to apply at these airports from 2022.

The current Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill will also grant the Secretary of State new powers to ensure that airports modernise their airspace, delivering quicker, quieter and cleaner journeys. Modernising flight paths and the

infrastructure of the sky will help reduce CO2 emissions from aviation, minimise noise for those near flight-paths and improve punctuality for passengers.

■ Bridges: Irish Sea

Stephen Farry: [\[18927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost to the public purse has been of assessing the viability of a bridge between Scotland and Northern Ireland to date; and how much funding has been allocated to that work.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The government is committed to upgrading our infrastructure, and we are looking at a range of options to level up the country and support growth and productivity in every region. We will set out more details on our plans to increase investment in infrastructure later this year.

■ Bus Services

Greg Smith: [\[18920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has for issuing new guidance for the operation of community buses under sections 19 and 22 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department will update its guidance on the 'exclusively non-commercial purposes' exemption to EU Regulation 1071/2009 on operator licensing in line with the High Court judgement in due course.

■ Bus Services: Standards

Lee Anderson: [\[18964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve bus services in (a) Ashfield constituency and (b) the UK.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The bus market outside London is deregulated and decisions regarding service provision are primarily a commercial matter for bus operators. However, the Bus Services Act 2017 provides the tools local authorities need to improve local bus services and increase passenger numbers.

The Government provided £1,002,539 for Nottinghamshire County Council during 2018/19 to support vulnerable services.

In addition, we have announced a further £30 million for less commercial services. Nottinghamshire County Council has been allocated £648,608 which will be available from April 2020 if the funding requirements are met. This is from the £220 million Better Deal for Bus Users package to transform bus services. The Government's ambition is to secure a long term, sustained improvement in bus services

underpinned by a National Bus Strategy for England which will be accompanied by a long-term funding settlement.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-better-deal-for-bus-users/a-better-deal-for-bus-users

On 11 February 2020, the Prime Minister announced there will be £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London which may benefit bus services serving Ashfield.

■ Bus Services: Wrekin

Mark Pritchard:

[18556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve the provision of bus services serving The Wrekin constituency.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The bus market outside London is deregulated and decisions regarding service provision are primarily a commercial matter for bus operators. However, the Bus Services Act 2017 provides the tools local authorities need to improve local bus services and increase passenger numbers.

The Government provided £90,742 for Telford and Wrekin Council during 2018/19, to support vulnerable services.

In addition, we have announced a further £30 million for less commercial services. Telford and Wrekin Council has been allocated £77,984 which will be available from April 2020 if the funding requirements are met. This is from the £220 million Better Deal for Bus Users package to transform bus services. The Government's ambition is to secure a long term, sustained improvement in bus services underpinned by a National Bus Strategy for England which will be accompanied by a long-term funding settlement.

On 11 February 2020, the Prime Minister announced there will be £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London which may benefit bus services serving The Wrekin.

■ Chester-Crewe Railway Line

Rob Roberts:

[21374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to improve the connectivity along the Chester to Crewe train line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As part of its Continuous Modular Strategic Planning work on long term strategy for the rail network, Network Rail is currently developing a proposal to assess what is required to support future rail enhancements planned for the West and Wales area, focusing on the railway hubs of Crewe, Chester and Warrington.

■ Chester-Shrewsbury Railway Line: Electrification

Rob Roberts: [\[21372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to electrify the Shrewsbury to Chester via Wrexham route.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Since 2010 we have delivered significant electrification to the rail network, delivering benefits for rail users and helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Network Rail-led Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy is currently examining whether electrification or new technologies are the better option where diesel trains currently run. This work, which will conclude this year, will inform decisions about electrification or use of new technologies on all parts of the network.

■ Cycleways: North East

Bridget Phillipson: [\[20471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to build cycle paths in (a) the North East and (b) Houghton and Sunderland South constituency.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The construction of cycle paths is a matter for local authorities. Decisions on future funding for cycling and walking infrastructure will be a matter for the Budget and forthcoming Spending Review.

However, on 11 February the Prime Minister announced £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.

In addition, in the last Parliament the Department for Transport provided support to 46 local authorities across England to help them develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans (LCWIPs). Four Local Authorities in the North East - Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland and Tees Valley - have produced draft LCWIPs.

The Department is currently working with the sector to develop further support for authorities on LCWIP scheme development.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[18430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is his policy to (a) make electric vehicle charge point payments payable by debit or credit card or (b) continue the existing subscription system.

Rachel Maclean:

A good consumer experience is vital to ensure electric vehicle (EV) uptake and drivers should find the charging experience as easy as refuelling an internal combustion engine car. We want drivers to be able to make quick and easy payments at rapid and high-powered chargers to help make ad-hoc, longer journeys fast and hassle free.

Last year the Government announced that we wanted to see all new rapid and higher powered chargepoints provide debit or credit card payment by spring 2020. We also announced that we wanted to see industry work together to deliver a roaming solution across the charging network, allowing EV drivers to use any public chargepoint through a single payment method without needing multiple smartphone apps or membership cards.

We are clear that we expect the market to respond, and follow the lead of those chargepoint operators, including BP Chargemaster, the largest chargepoint operator in the UK, who have already made a commitment that they will provide this facility at their chargepoints. The Government took powers through in the Automated and Electric Vehicles Act (AEVA) to regulate the EV infrastructure market. If the market does not make sufficient progress in this area quickly Government stands ready to require chargepoint operators to do so through regulation.

■ Heathrow Airport: Construction

Ruth Cadbury:

[18749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of a (a) one year, (b) two year and (c) three year delay to construction of a third runway at Heathrow Airport on (i) noise, (ii) air pollution and (iii) congestion on local transport networks.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Our airports are national assets and their expansion is a core part of boosting our global connectivity. This in turn will drive economic growth for all parts of this country, connecting our nations and regions to international markets, levelling up our economy and supporting a truly Global Britain.

The Court of Appeal ruled on 27 February that when designating the Airports National Policy Statement, which was backed by Parliament, the previous Government did not take account of the Paris Agreement, non-CO2 emissions and emissions post 2050. We have always been clear that Heathrow expansion is a private sector project which must meet strict criteria on air quality, noise and climate change, as well as being privately financed, affordable, and delivered in the best interest of consumers. The Government has taken the decision not to appeal this judgment. The promoters of the scheme will be able to seek permission from the Supreme Court to appeal if they wish.

As part of its judgment, the Court has declared that the Airports National Policy Statement is of no legal effect unless and until the government carries out a review under the Planning Act 2008. The Court's judgment is complex and requires careful consideration. We will set out our next steps in due course.

Ruth Cadbury:

[18750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a phased construction of a third runway at Heathrow Airport on new connections to regional airports.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Our airports are national assets and their expansion is a core part of boosting our global connectivity. This in turn will drive economic growth for all parts of this country, connecting our nations and regions to international markets, levelling up our economy and supporting a truly Global Britain.

The Court of Appeal ruled on 27 February that when designating the Airports National Policy Statement, which was backed by Parliament, the previous Government did not take account of the Paris Agreement, non-CO2 emissions and emissions post 2050. We have always been clear that Heathrow expansion is a private sector project which must meet strict criteria on air quality, noise and climate change, as well as being privately financed, affordable, and delivered in the best interest of consumers. The Government has taken the decision not to appeal this judgment. The promoters of the scheme will be able to seek permission from the Supreme Court to appeal if they wish.

As part of its judgment, the Court has declared that the Airports National Policy Statement is of no legal effect unless and until the government carries out a review under the Planning Act 2008. The Court's judgment is complex and requires careful consideration. We will set out our next steps in due course.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Tulip Siddiq: [\[18677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has held with (a) representatives of Chinese companies and (b) the Chinese Government on the construction or operation of High Speed 2.

Andrew Stephenson:

There have been meetings with delegations from a number of countries including China over several years to discuss opportunities in the UK rail industry including HS2. The Department for Transport is always keen to learn from the experience of others and to consider bids through the proper procurement processes that offer value for money to the taxpayer.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Crewe

Rob Roberts: [\[21375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for Crewe to be added to the High Speed Two line upon completion of existing plans.

Andrew Stephenson:

Crewe is already a hub on the existing rail network and current plans will see passengers benefitting from an HS2 interchange, with shorter journey times to London and improved cross-country connectivity.

The Government response to the Crewe Hub consultation confirmed its support for the 'Crewe Hub' vision, with up to 5-7 HS2 trains per hour stopping. We continue to work with Network Rail, HS2 and local partners towards realising this vision.

■ High Speed Two

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[21121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the HS2 Ltd Phase One Planning Forum minutes for November 2019 will be published.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Phase One Planning Forum planned for 21st November 2019 was cancelled as a result of the pre-election period restrictions, so there are no minutes.

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[21122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the names of the chair and attendees to the September 2019 meeting of the HS2 Phase One Planning Forum have been redacted in the minutes for that meeting.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd redacts personal data from the HS2 Phase One Planning Forum minutes in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

■ High Speed Two: Balfour Beatty

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[18422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the payment of £11,864,405.23 on 11 September 2019 made by HS2 Ltd to Balfour Beatty for Main Works Civils Contractor Stage One TP included a 20 per cent contingency.

Andrew Stephenson:

Payments are made to contracting entities working on the HS2 project in accordance with the terms of their contracts. As with all commercial relationships, it would not be appropriate to expand on individual transactions as this would prejudice commercial interests. The House will be regularly updated on the costs of HS2 following the Government's decision and published Oakervee Review.

■ High Speed Two: China

Jon Trickett: [\[18470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which individuals accompanied Mark Thurston, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, on his visit to Beijing in April 2018.

Andrew Stephenson:

Mark Thurston did not visit Beijing in April 2018. On 10 April 2019 Mark Thurston met representatives of the National Development & Reform Commission (NDRC) along with the HM Trade Commissioner to China. On 11 April 2019 Mark Thurston was accompanied by Department for International Trade officials to a round table meeting with NDRC and key Chinese rail companies. The purpose of the visit was to gather international best practice of core elements of High Speed Rail projects, such as station design, maintenance and operational processes.

Jon Trickett: [\[18471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the purpose was of the visit by Mark Thurston, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, to Beijing in April 2018.

Andrew Stephenson:

Mark Thurston did not visit Beijing in April 2018. In April 2019 Mark Thurston visited Japan, China and Hong Kong to meet with companies responsible for developing and operating high speed networks. He also visited high speed stations in Tokyo, Beijing and Kowloon. The purpose of the visit was to gather international best practice of core elements of High Speed Rail projects, such as station design, maintenance and operational processes.

At the advice of the previous Chairman, Sir David Higgins, Mark Thurston also undertook two other short, 48hr, overseas visits - to Italy and Spain - in March 2018 to learn from their experiences of delivering High Speed Rail. Spain has the largest high speed network outside of China.

Jon Trickett: [\[18472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether funding from the public purse was allocated to the visit to Beijing in April 2018 by Mark Thurston, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd.

Andrew Stephenson:

Mark Thurston did not visit Beijing in April 2018. In April 2019 Mark Thurston visited Japan, China and Hong Kong to meet with companies responsible for developing and operating high speed networks, hosted by the British Embassy and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and supported by HM Trade Commissioner to China and the Department for International Trade. The purpose of the visit was to gather international best practice of core elements of High Speed Rail projects, such as station design, maintenance and operational processes. The only business expense claimed was Mark Thurston's international flights. Where travel is for business purposes it is reasonable for it to be covered by HS2 Ltd in line with its published policies. Mark Thurston covered his own internal travel expenses, accommodation, and expenditure for this trip.

■ High Speed Two: Publications

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[18421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the (a) date of commissioning, (b) date of production and (c) fees payable for each report commissioned by HS2 Ltd from PwC.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd regularly seeks advice from experts and consultants to help deliver the project in the most efficient way possible. The costs incurred with PwC are strictly controlled through HS2 Ltd's procurement and contractual management processes.

HS2 Ltd has engaged with PwC on a variety of work since 2013, and they have provided services to HS2 Ltd which include (but is not limited to):

Auditing Services; Internal Auditing; Professional Procurement Services; Accountancy Services; Assurance and Risk Services; Commercial services; Economic Research; Engineering Services - Surveying and Building Valuation; Finance Consultancy; Procurement Consultancy; Property and Construction Consultancy; Strategic Consultancy; and Technical Consultancy.

All HS2 Ltd Expenditure over £25,000 is published on a monthly basis here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dft-departmental-spending-over-25000>.

■ High Speed Two: Training

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[18420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what HS2 Ltd's total budget is for development of the new construction skills training school on the Maria Fidelis School site; and what the prices are for contracts with (a) Conisbee, (b) Beadmans, (c) Max Fordham and (d) ADW Developments for the initial works on the new building on that site.

Andrew Stephenson:

In accordance with assurances provided to Camden Council, HS2 Ltd are contributing funding to this project. As is stated in HS2 Ltd's Register of Undertakings and Assurances the Secretary of State will require the nominated undertaker (HS2 Ltd) to make a contribution up to a maximum of £4,100,000 towards the cost of the construction, property costs, fitting out and ongoing running costs of the skills centre. This commitment was secured during the passage of the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill, which received Royal Assent on 23 February 2017.

Overall responsibility for delivery of the skills centre sits with Camden Council (i.e. the contracts are not held by HS2 Ltd).

HS2 Ltd and its relevant contractors are working with Camden Council to ensure that the Construction Skills Centre will deliver skills and employment services that are relevant to HS2 Ltd's needs.

■ M20: Maidstone

Damian Green:

[20371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the potential cost to the public purse of creating a junction 8A on the M20; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

No estimate has been made as the Department has not received any representations seeking the construction of such a junction.

■ Members: Correspondence

Maria Eagle: [\[20386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 13 January 2020 from the hon. Member for Garston and Halewood on the Tyred campaign to ban dangerous old tyres from UK roads.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Roads Minister has recently responded on this issue.

■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Mr Richard Holden: [\[18923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what role hybrid vehicles will have as part of plans to decarbonise the transport sector; and whether new hybrid vehicles will be able to be bought after 2035.

Rachel Maclean:

On the 4th February the Prime Minister announced that we are consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible.

We are consulting on the Committee on Climate Change recommendation that any new vehicles sold after the phase out date must be zero emission at the tailpipe. The proposals relate to new cars and vans - owners of existing petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans will still be able to use these vehicles and buy and sell them on the used market.

The technologies on sale, and the market share of those technologies, must be compatible with achieving our 2050 net zero climate change target and our long-term air quality goals.

Mr Richard Holden: [\[18924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of (a) the potential merits of hybrid large commercial vehicles as a step towards full electrification and (b) the difference in range between hybrid and electric large commercial vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government's long-term goal is the development and deployment of zero emission Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). While the pathway to achieving this is not as clear as for cars and vans, technologies are starting to emerge even for the largest vehicles. Zero emission technologies are at different stages of development for different segments of the HGV sector, with solutions more advanced for zero emission smaller, shorter-haul HGVs than for larger, long-haul HGVs. However, zero emission technologies exist and are technically proven for all types of HGVs and operations. For example, electrification of large and long-haul HGVs is possible. Manufacturers have produced large electric HGVs and there have been several successful trials of dynamic charging technologies for HGVs internationally.

Government-supported research will evaluate the potential costs, benefits and opportunities associated with various technologies, as well as their suitability for different types of HGVs and duty cycles across different parts of the network. This research will be conducted with a view to ultimately performing full-scale demonstrator trials on the UK road network, if appropriate technologies are identified. The research will be valuable in identifying the most promising solutions for the UK network and how best to develop them.

The Government will also continue to pursue regulatory opportunities to support the road freight sector in switching to lower emission commercial vehicles and are working with industry to develop an ultra low emission truck (ULET) standard to provide certainty on emission standards and encourage industry R&D in this area.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[20395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps not to implement the change to EU European Motor Insurance Directive on motor insurance in relation to (a) public roads and (b) private property for (i) ride-on lawnmowers, (ii) golf carts and (iii) tractors as a result of the judgment of the European Court of Justice on *Damijan Vnuk v Zavarovalnica Triglav*; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We have always made it clear that we oppose any measure which imposes an unreasonable burden on motor sports, motorists and other vehicle users. This is exactly the sort of rule that the UK has the option to opt out of after the Transition Period and Ministers will shortly be making a decision on this issue.

■ Motorways

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[18557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish a list of preferred alternative routes to smart motorways for drivers driving long distance who wish to avoid all-lane running smart motorways; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We want our roads to be as safe as possible. That is why the Secretary of State asked the Department to carry out an evidence stocktake to gather the facts about the safety of smart motorways and make recommendations. The Department will present the findings of the stocktake shortly.

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

■ North Wales Coast Railway Line

Rob Roberts: [\[21373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to ensure better connectivity along the North Wales to Chester train line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has funded extensive development work, through a series of Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOBCs) announced at the Autumn 2017 Budget, to identify where further investment into the Welsh rail network could make a real difference to the people and economy of Wales. Based on the findings of the SOBCs, we are taking enhancement proposals, including journey time improvements along the North Wales Coast Main Line between Llandudno and Chester, through the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP), subject to a better understanding and assurance of likely costs.

■ Offshore Industry: Helicopters

Alex Cunningham: [\[18700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether European Technical Standard Orders issued by the European Aviation Safety Agency after 31 December 2020 will continue to apply to commercial helicopter operators in the oil and gas industry on the UK continental shelf.

Rachel Maclean:

As the Prime Minister has made clear, the most important objective – in all policy areas – is for the UK to have economic and political independence. Whatever happens, we will not enter a relationship in which we do not have control of our own laws and political life. That means we will not agree to any Treaty obligations for our laws to be aligned with the EU's or for the EU's institutions, including the European Court of Justice, to have any jurisdiction in the UK. This includes the European Technical Standard Orders.

■ Pedestrian Crossings: Accidents

Greg Smith: [\[18921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many road traffic accidents have been recorded as taking place on or in the vicinity of pedestrian crossings in each of the last three years.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The number of reported road accidents with a personal injury within 50 metres of a pedestrian crossings in Great Britain between 2016 and 2018 can be found in the below table.

REPORTED ROAD ACCIDENTS WITH A PERSONAL INJURY WITHIN 50 METRES OF PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS¹ , ², GREAT BRITAIN, 2016-2018

REPORTED ROAD ACCIDENTS WITH A PERSONAL INJURY WITHIN 50 METRES OF PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS¹ , ², GREAT BRITAIN, 2016-2018

Year Accidents

2016 25,829

2017 25,348

2018 25,235

Source: DfT,
STATS19

1. Includes human controlled crossings by school crossing patrols and by other authorised persons, zebra crossings, pelicans, puffins, toucans or other similar non-junctions, pedestrian phases at traffic signal junctions, footbridges or subways, and central refuges
2. Excludes cases where road crossing type was undefined

■ Ports: Finance

Gareth Thomas:

[\[18496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, who the recipients were and what the purpose was of each (a) grant and (b) loan of funding under the Ports Infrastructure Resilience and Capacity Fund in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The recipients of grants under the Ports and Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity Fund were: Bristol, Dover, Felixstowe, Harwich, Heysham, Hull, Immingham, Liverpool, London Gateway, Newhaven, Plymouth, Poole, Portsmouth, Sheerness, Southampton and Teesport. These grants were for a range of infrastructure projects contributing to more resilient handling of traffic and freight at maritime ports. This fund was set up in 2019, so no grants were awarded in previous years.

No loan funding has been awarded through this fund.

■ Railways: Cycleways

Rosie Duffield:

[\[21296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which cycle routes are located on dismantled railway lines in England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department does not hold this information centrally. Information on local cycle routes in their areas is held by local authorities. Sustrans (reception@sustrans.org.uk) and Railway Paths Limited (estateoffice@railwaypaths.org.uk) also hold information on cycle routes located on dismantled railway lines, some of which form part of the National Cycle Network.

■ Railways: Electrification

Lilian Greenwood: [\[20466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many single track kilometres of rail electrification will be delivered in each year of Network Rail's Control Period 6.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Electrification can deliver benefits for rail users and will play a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. Since the beginning of Control Period 6 (CP6) in April 2019, we have delivered over 130 single track miles of electrification, with around 120 more single track miles planned by March 2021.

Electrification for the remainder of CP6 will be committed as business cases for each scheme are approved. This is a standard feature of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, which ensures an affordable, deliverable programme of investment by assessing schemes continuously throughout the Control Period.

■ Railways: Midlands and North of England

Judith Cummins: [\[20505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North, announced on 21 February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan will be published by the end of the year. Government is committed to pressing ahead with HS2, NPR and related programmes.

Judith Cummins: [\[20506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission on the rail needs of the Midlands and the North, announced on 21 February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

As set out in the Terms of Reference, published on 21 February 2020, the Integrated Rail Plan will be published by the end of the year.

Judith Cummins: [\[20507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North, announced on 21 February 2020, will include an assessment of the proposed route for Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan will consider how best to integrate HS2 Phase 2b and wider transport plans in the North and Midlands, delivering benefits from investments more quickly. This will include a recommended way forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments.

Judith Cummins:

[20508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to consult on the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North, announced on 21 February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

I am committed to ensuring the North and Midlands are fully engaged and consulted throughout the Integrated Rail Plan process. I plan to undertake a series of roundtables and visits with Northern and Midlands leaders in the coming months as we begin to develop our ambitious Integrated Rail Plan.

■ Railways: Surveys

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[19038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking in response to the finding by the Office for Statistics Regulation published on 8 January 2020 that the National Rail Passenger Survey does not reflect passengers' experience of rail travel in the UK.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[19039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the finding by the Office for Statistics Regulation published on 8 January 2020 that there is a substantial risk of misinterpretation and misuse of the results of the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) by using a journey-based approach, what steps his Department plans to take to review how the results of the NRPS are used in the (a) award and (b) review processes for rail franchising.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[19042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Office for Statistics Regulation's conclusion that Transport Focus should extend engagement on National Passenger Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) to a broader range of users to ensure that different user perspectives are fed into the future development of the NRPS statistics.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department welcomes the Office for Statistics Regulation report and will work with Transport Focus to help it meet the recommendations set out in the report.

Transport Focus has published its plan to address the OSR recommendations, available here: <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/action-plan-for-nrps/>

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [19040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons some train operating companies are provided with the results of the National Rail Passenger Survey three weeks in advance.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics, a small number of individuals can be given access to official statistics before their public release; these are limited to those involved in the production of the statistics and the preparation of the release, and for quality assurance purposes.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [19041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons his Department has not implemented the proposal by Transport Focus for continuous rail passenger interviewing.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Whilst Transport Focus provided the Department with a proposal for a move to continuous National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) fieldwork in 2017, the costs of the options provided were prohibitive at that time.

The rail industry does not rely solely on the NRPS and since 2017, the Department has been working with industry to develop a wider range of evidence to understand and improve rail performance, including more continuous measurement of passenger views and experience.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [19043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that the National Rail Passenger Survey collects data on passenger support for the presence of on-train and station staff.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [19044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that the National Rail Passenger Survey includes questions on the accessibility of railways for disabled people that (a) travel by rail and (b) do not currently travel by rail.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) collects information on passenger satisfaction with rail services, including satisfaction with various aspects of the service currently delivered by staff. The NRPS would not be the appropriate survey to ask about support for the presence of staff given it is focussed on specific journeys, rather than general attitudes to rail. However, this is an important area, and Transport Focus has itself carried out other research on this topic, for example, <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/passenger-attitudes-towards-rail-staff/>.

The NRPS collects data on the experiences of disabled rail passengers via a special module of questions every Autumn wave. This data is available to view and download from the Transport Focus data hub on the Transport Focus website. My Rt Hon

Friend the Secretary of State has been clear that he wants the railways to lead the way on accessible travel.

The NRPS doesn't collect data on any rail non-users (people who do not currently travel by rail). The Department, however, is exploring the option of collecting experience and satisfaction data on rail non-users, including disabled rail non-users, as part of its wider programme of research on passenger experience.

■ Road Traffic Control: Finance

Luke Pollard: [\[18389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to review the effect on local authority finances of issuing traffic regulation orders.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department for Transport has begun a review of traffic order legislation, including the costs and benefits of the current regime and the impact on local authorities of making and applying for their own orders. Work has included research that was carried out in 2019 by the Department for Transport, Geoplace, Ordnance Survey and the British Parking Association. This estimated, for example, that the annual advertising costs for Traffic Orders and Temporary Traffic Orders across all authorities in Great Britain is approximately £49 million. The Department for Transport continued its review later in 2019. We now plan to consult on proposed amendments later in 2020.

■ Transport: Exhaust Emissions

Sir Alan Campbell: [\[18502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish a strategy on decarbonising transport.

Rachel Maclean:

We are committed to going further and faster to tackle climate change. Our bold and ambitious plan to achieve net zero emissions across all transport will help make our towns and cities better places to live, create new jobs, as well as improving air quality and health. We are working with industry and communities around the country to develop the plan and expect to publish it in the Autumn ahead of COP26 in Glasgow.

■ Transport: Finance

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[20529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce regional disparities in transport funding.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We have made clear our ambition to invest in our infrastructure and level up opportunity across the country. We've already taken steps to do this, including developing the Midlands Rail Hub, pledging £500m to start to reverse the Beeching

cuts and announcing £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London. As we look ahead we will continue to focus on levelling-up as we deliver an infrastructure revolution for the whole country.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[21236\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 1971, when the EU Commission requested the UK's observations regarding post duty paid dilution and its compatibility with EU Law; when his Department responded to that request; and if he will publish that response.

Jesse Norman:

The EU Commission requested the UK's observations regarding post duty point dilution in February 2017. HM Revenue and Customs responded to that request in May 2017.

As communications between the Commission and Member States on infringement proceedings are generally confidential, the Government does not intend to publish the UK's response.

■ Beer: Excise Duties

Alex Sobel: [\[18977\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of whether there is a link between the rate of beer duty and independent pub closures.

Jesse Norman:

No such assessment has been made. However, all taxes are kept under review and the impact of a change to beer duty is considered at each fiscal event, including its effect on pubs and the wider economy.

The Government remains clear in its support for consumers, pubs and breweries, and has taken action to this end; ensuring the price of a pint of beer is 14p is lower than it otherwise would have been since ending the beer duty escalator in 2013.

■ Business: Competition

Ben Lake: [\[20548\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the conclusions of the Centre for International Competitiveness's report, UK Competitiveness Index 2019, published in March 2019.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Competitiveness index benchmarks the performance of different regions and nations across the UK. To tackle regional disparities, we are committed to levelling up opportunity across every nation and region. This includes, a £5bn package of

investment for buses and cycling, a consultation on Freeports, and we will proceed with HS2 to deliver essential North-South connectivity, greater capacity, and shorter journey times. We will continue to build on this to deliver on our ambition to level up the whole of the UK.

■ Capital Gains Tax

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[20398]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2020 to Question 11458 on Capital Gains Tax on what date the comprehensive communications plan began.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC recognise that this is a significant change and on 24 February started to roll out a comprehensive communications plan publicly, so that people understand what the changes mean for them and what they need to do. HMRC are confident that the majority of tax agents are aware of this change, as it has been widely reported in the sector media.

On Monday 24th February HMRC held a webinar with approximately 1,200 agents to talk through the new process and requirements. This was well received and HMRC is in the process of planning further events around the time of implementation. A news story on GOV.UK has now been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/get-ready-for-changes-to-capital-gains-tax-payment-for-uk-property-sales>.

Further targeted communications are planned throughout March into April, and throughout the year, to make sure this information is fully embedded.

■ Coronavirus

Seema Malhotra:

[20491]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the risks to the UK economy of covid-19 in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

John Glen:

The government is actively monitoring the outbreak and is well prepared for any effect it may have on the UK economy. The impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on the UK economy is highly uncertain and it is too early to assess the impact. As an open economy, the UK is exposed to a global economic slowdown caused by Covid-19.

Decisions taken since 2010 mean the public finances have been restored, the economy has grown each year and we have reached near record levels of employment. Those strengths mean we are well-placed to deal with any potential impact caused by Covid-19.

Seema Malhotra: [\[20492\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on funding for additional resources for the NHS to respond to the spread of covid-19.

Steve Barclay:

The Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Health often meet to discuss funding issues. Public safety is the government's top priority and the Treasury is ready to work with departments facing pressures from the coronavirus outbreak to ensure they have appropriate budget cover.

■ Electric Vehicles: Taxation

Ben Lake: [\[20550\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the existing tax regime in respect of electricity consumption for electric vehicle charging.

Jesse Norman:

Technology is changing many aspects of the economy, including vehicles. The Government keeps under review how the tax system will need to adapt to manage those changes, including the VAT treatment of electric vehicles and electricity.

Electric vehicle drivers already benefit from paying no Vehicle Excise Duty on most zero emission vehicles.

■ Entrepreneurs' Relief: Wales

Ben Lake: [\[20601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people claimed Entrepreneurs' Relief in Wales in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Jesse Norman:

Statistics for Capital Gains Tax for the 2018-19 tax year are not yet available.

The number of people claiming Entrepreneurs' Relief in Wales in the 2017-18 fiscal year is 1,600 (rounded to the nearest hundred).

■ EU External Trade: Carbon Emissions

Barry Gardiner: [\[20374\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for the Government's policies of the EU's proposed carbon border tax.

Jesse Norman:

The European Commission has yet to make a concrete proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism, but the Government is following the EU's debate on possible designs with interest.

The overall destination of Net Zero by 2050 is shared by the UK, and the Government will continue to work with the EU to secure ambitious climate objectives.

■ EU Grants and Loans

Zarah Sultana:

[18876]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has for (a) universities and (b) other UK institutions to be able to participate in EU-funded projects after 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Public Mandate states that the UK is ready to consider participation in certain EU programmes where it is in the UK's and the EU's interest that the UK does so. The Public Mandate can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-approach-to-the-future-relationship-with-the-eu>

The UK will consider a relationship in line with non-EU Member State participation for the following programmes: Horizon Europe, Euratom Research and Training, and Copernicus. The UK will consider service access agreements for the following programmes: EU Space Surveillance and Tracking, and the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service. The Government's manifesto set out its ambitious approach on research and development, including a commitment to continue collaboration internationally and with the EU on scientific research, including Horizon Europe.

The UK Government wants to ensure that UK and European universities and institutions continue to benefit from each other's world-leading systems and expertise. The UK will consider options for participation in elements of Erasmus+ on a time-limited basis, provided the terms are in the UK's interests. The Government is considering a wide range of options with regards to future cooperation, including potential domestic alternatives. Decisions on future budget provisions are a matter for the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The proposed regulations for programmes in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-27) are still being discussed in the EU and are yet to be finalised. The UK's future participation in these programmes and projects will be subject to negotiations on the UK-EU relationship.

Under the financial settlement the UK will continue to contribute to the EU budget in respect of the EU's current financial planning period (the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-20) and will continue to participate and benefit from its programmes and receive receipts for the duration of projects, which in some cases go beyond 2020.

■ First Time Buyers: Individual Savings Accounts

Stephen Hammond: [18545]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of first time buyers that have used a (a) Help to Buy ISA and (b) Lifetime ISA to fund the purchase of a home.

John Glen:

370,768 first-time buyers have made use of a Help to Buy: ISA up to September 2019. This information is available in the Help to Buy: ISA Scheme Quarterly Statistics report, which was released on 27 February 2020 and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-isa-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2015-to-30-september-2019>

An estimate of the number of first-time buyers who have used a Lifetime ISA to fund the purchase of a home is not currently available.

■ First Time Buyers: Stamp Duty Land Tax

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [18730]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will reduce the stamp duty rate for first-time buyers purchasing properties above the threshold set for first-time buyers.

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [18731]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will reduce stamp duty rates for private home buyers.

Jesse Norman:

At Autumn Statement 2014, residential SDLT was cut for 98% of people who pay it, unless they are purchasing additional property, and at Autumn Budget 2017 the Government introduced first time buyers' relief which has already helped over 240,000 people get onto the housing ladder.

All taxes are kept under review as part of the Budget cycle.

■ Free Zones: Crime

Ian Lavery: [18720]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made for the implications for his policies on free ports of the potential risk of (a) tax avoidance, (b) money laundering and (c) other illegal activities taking place in those ports.

Steve Barclay:

The UK plays a key role in tackling cross-border illegal activity and this is not going to change. UK Freeports will be innovative hubs that boost trade, attract inward investment and drive productive activity across the UK. HMRC have been closely involved in their design to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of tax towards funding our vital public services, while boosting growth in all regions of the UK.

■ Free Zones: Tax Allowances

Ian Lavery: [18721]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether companies operating within free ports will be subject to (a) tax and (b) other financial incentives.

Steve Barclay:

We are considering a wide range of measures to create vibrant, innovative Freeports which are attractive to domestic and international investors looking to start or grow their UK operations.

■ Freeports Advisory Panel

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [18729]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what role the Freeports Advisory Committee plays prior to the publishing of proposals relating to free ports.

Steve Barclay:

We have drawn on advice from the Freeports Advisory Panel, as well as evidence from successful Freeports around the world and industry experts, to develop an ambitious UK Freeport model.

We are now consulting on these proposals and seeking input from businesses, ports and the public. The Freeports Advisory Panel will continue to play an important role.

■ Help to Buy Scheme: North East Bedfordshire

Richard Fuller: [18512]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information he holds on the number of people who have taken up a Help to Buy ISA in the North East Bedfordshire constituency.

John Glen:

The information requested is not available.

HM Treasury releases Help to Buy: ISA data on a quarterly basis and have made this information available in the latest quarterly statistics publication which was released on 27 February 2020. This publication is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-isa-scheme-quarterly-statistics-december-2015-to-30-september-2019>

■ Incinerators: Taxation

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [18381]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce a tax on waste incineration.

Jesse Norman:

At Budget 2018, the Government announced that a tax on the incineration of waste would not be taken forward at that point. All taxes remain under review.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Valuation

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns: [\[18639\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake a review level of the business rates transitional relief.

Jesse Norman:

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

■ Public Expenditure

Ben Lake: [\[20547\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on Budget 2020.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Government is taking steps to ensure that the Budget delivers and shows clear benefits for the whole United Kingdom. Treasury ministers have regular discussions with the Welsh Government and the Secretary of State for Wales on matters of importance to the Welsh economy.

■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry: [\[18390\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate has been made of the quantum of the Barnett consequential for the Northern Ireland Executive announced during the 2019-20 Financial Year subsequent to the detail set out in the Main Estimates memorandum provided by the Northern Ireland Office; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury's Supplementary Estimates 2019-20 document sets out all the changes in the Northern Ireland Executive's funding since the Main Estimates 2019-20. The Supplementary Estimates 2019-20 publication can be found on the gov.uk website.

Following the Supplementary Estimates 2019-20, the Northern Ireland Executive funding from the UK government has increased by over £380m compared to Main Estimates 2019-20.

■ Revenue and Customs: Staff

Andrew Bowie: [\[18711\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC staff employed in offices undergoing closure as part of departmental restructuring will be entitled to the full 21 months compensation despite delays in those closures.

Jesse Norman:

All exit schemes in Government departments must be launched using the Government's Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS) terms in place at that

time. The current CSCS terms are capped at a maximum of 21 months' pay for those aged under 60 and a maximum of 6 months' pay for those aged 60 or over.

In September 2017, the Government launched a consultation which proposed changes to the current 2010 CSCS, in line with the HM Treasury framework for exit schemes across the public sector. The Cabinet Office has recently confirmed an extension to the 2010 terms until 31 March 2020 which guarantees those terms for anyone who signs up to an exit package by that date.

HMRC continue to work closely with the Cabinet Office on the progress of the consultation and will continue to do so in order to seek to provide clarity for those people affected by HMRC's transformation programme. The progress of the consultation is reviewed regularly and at this time, it is not known what the changes may be, or if and when they will be introduced.

For HMRC, exits are always a last resort and HMRC are committed to looking for redeployment opportunities and supporting people to find other roles in the Civil Service. In line with the 2016 Cabinet Office Redundancy Protocols, an exit scheme will only be considered once other options have been exhausted and there is no alternative.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax: Foreign Nationals

Ben Lake:

[\[21290\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how the proposed residence test in respect of the stamp duty land tax surcharge for non-UK residents purchasing residential property in England and Northern Ireland was determined.

Jesse Norman:

The Government consulted between 11 February and 6 May 2019 on an SDLT surcharge on non-UK residents purchasing residential property in England and Northern Ireland. Scotland and Wales have devolved land transaction taxes.

The consultation set out that an individual would be deemed non-UK resident if they spent fewer than 183 days in the UK in the year before transaction. For the purposes of the surcharge it is proposed that days spent in the whole of the UK will be relevant, not just days spent in England and Northern Ireland.

A summary of responses received to this consultation will be published in due course, setting out further details of the policy design.

■ Taxation: Advisory Services

Neil Coyle:

[\[18843\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to further regulate tax advisers.

Jesse Norman:

As announced in the response to the independent review of the loan charge, the Government will launch a call for evidence on what steps it can take to raise standards in the tax advice market.

■ Taxation: Self-assessment

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[20400\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much was paid in fines by people who submitted tax returns after the deadline of 31 January in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Jesse Norman:

The 2015-16 Self-Assessment (SA) tax return typically has an online filing deadline of 31 January 2017, the 2016-17 Self-Assessment (SA) tax return typically has an online filing deadline of 31 January 2018 and correspondingly, the 2017-18 Self-Assessment tax return typically has an online filing deadline of 31 January 2019.

The value of payments attributed to late filing penalties for people filing late and after the deadline of 31 January in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019 is as follows:

TAX YEAR PENALTY RELATES TO	PENALTY PAYMENTS
2015-16	£133,669,000
2016-17	£111,272,000
2017-18	£75,363,000

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand. These figures have been produced using an extract of the data provided for analytical purposes, and there may be small differences between this and other HMRC systems including the live SA system (CESA).

This analysis is based on penalties created and payments received to February 2020. The 2017-18, 2016-17 and 2015-16 figures cover a period of 1, 2 and 3 years' penalty payments respectively. More penalties will be issued and paid in relation to all these years but further payments to recent years will be relatively higher, so there will be greater changes to recent years. It is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between different years' figures.

The above figures include both full and part-payments for the initial £100 late filing penalty, daily penalties, 6 month and 12 month late filing penalties. Late payment penalties have not been included.

These late filing penalties relate to individuals who filed online after 31 January after the end of the corresponding tax year and at least 3 months after they were issued with a notice to file; individuals who have missed the 31 January deadline and who have not yet filed their SA return for the corresponding tax year; and, individuals who

did not need to file an SA return for that tax year but received late filing penalties due to late notification.

The figures may include some penalty payments relating to Trust returns as they receive the same penalty code. Penalty payments relating to partnership returns are not included.

Penalties are not used as a means of generating revenue. HMRC want taxpayers to comply with their obligations.

HMRC charge penalties to encourage taxpayers to meet their tax obligations and to act as a sanction for those who do not, so the majority who do pay correctly and on time are not disadvantaged.

Not all taxpayers who fail to submit their return on time will have to pay a penalty. A penalty will not be payable if a taxpayer had a reasonable excuse for not filing their return on time or if they no longer need to file a return.

HMRC will not know if a taxpayer has a reasonable excuse or no longer need to file a return until the taxpayer tells HMRC.

■ Tobacco: Smuggling

Martyn Day: [\[18627\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has for the tobacco track and trace system in the UK at the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [\[18628\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the tobacco track and trace system; and whether the UK will lose access to the secondary repository in the event that there is no UK-EU trade deal at the end of the transition period.

Martyn Day: [\[18629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential effect of an increase in counterfeit goods on the potential suspension of the tobacco track and trace system at the end of the transition period.

Martyn Day: [\[18630\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure counterfeit tobacco products do not enter the country at the end of the transition period.

Martyn Day: [\[18645\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has for the tobacco track and trace system at the end of the sell-through period on 20 May 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The UK has now left the EU and entered a transition period which ends on 31 December 2020. During the transition period there will be no change to the track and trace system. At the end of the transition period, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) will need to make some changes to the current system for it to continue to operate. The changes will be kept to the minimum necessary to enable the UK to have full regulatory control.

In addition to the track and trace system, cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco incorporate a UK security label that contains sophisticated anti-counterfeit security technology. There will therefore be no increase in the risk of counterfeit cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco entering the UK as a result of any changes to the track and trace system at the end of the transition period.

The UK has a strong record of tackling the illicit trade in tobacco products, and the track and trace system is a key component of HMRC's strategy. The strategy continues to evolve, reflecting constant changes in the nature of the fraud, and will continue to do so at the end of the transition period.

At the end of the sell-through period, all cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco in the UK supply chain must be marked with a UK ID code and security label. Any remaining unmarked stock that can no longer be sold in the UK can be returned in accordance with the existing procedures retailers have in place with their suppliers.

WALES

■ Floods: Wales

Jo Stevens: [\[20517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on UK Government financial support for tackling the flooding caused in Wales by storm Dennis.

Simon Hart:

My Department and others are determined to ensure that all of those affected by flooding are supported in the best way possible. Flood response in Wales is a devolved matter. The UK Government will look seriously at any request from the Welsh Government for additional support and assistance for flood relief, including additional finances.

■ Storms: Wales

Chris Bryant: [\[19777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the Coal Authority on former coal mining sites in Wales following the landslides caused by storm Dennis.

Simon Hart:

Following the unprecedented flooding brought by recent storms, urgent work is being carried out across the UK to assess any risk posed to people or property and to confirm that everyone with a legal responsibility around the tips is fulfilling their safety obligations. Authorities and agencies involved are working together and good progress is being made on this vital work.

I spoke with the Coal Authority on 23 February 2020 and was further reassured following a meeting on 24 February 2020 with the First Minister of Wales, Natural Resources Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the Coal Authority that we have a plan of action to allow us to make the necessary assessment of coal tips across South Wales.

I welcome the commitment from all partners to ensuring that this work is delivered at pace, enabling us to be able to provide the general public in the locality of coal tips with appropriate reassurance. The Welsh and UK Governments will continue to co-ordinate this vital work.

■ Wales Office: Flags

Philip Davies:

[\[21203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales owns three Union Jacks and three flags of Wales.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Employment: Menopause

Alex Norris:

[\[20605\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to improve workplace support for women going through the menopause.

Alex Norris:

[\[20606\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans the Government has to improve workplace support for women experiencing the menopause.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Government is committed to supporting working women at all stages of their lives and enabling them to reach their potential.

We have worked with businesses and academics to highlight the role employers can play in supporting women going through menopause transition. This includes setting out practical actions employers can take. This also sits alongside other policies and

programmes, such as flexible working, which can help everyone remain economically active as long as they choose to.

Alex Norris: [\[21351\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government has taken to encourage employers to support women in the workplace that are experiencing menopause by (a) training staff to provide support, (b) raising awareness and (c) providing transition-related advice.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Government is committed to supporting working women at all stages of their lives and enabling them to reach their potential.

We have worked with businesses and academics to highlight the role employers can play in supporting women going through menopause transition, including setting out practical actions employers can take. This work also sits alongside other policies and programmes, such as flexible working, which can help everyone remain economically active as long as they choose to.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Coronavirus

Alex Sobel: [\[20565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there are financial provisions in place for (a) agency workers, (b) people on temporary contracts and (c) other employees who do not receive statutory sick pay in the event that their employers ask them to stay away from the workplace due to coronavirus concerns.

Justin Tomlinson:

Those whose employers ask them to stay away from the workplace due to coronavirus concerns, who do not qualify for Statutory Sick Pay, may be able to claim Universal Credit and/or new-style Employment and Support Allowance. Those who do qualify for Statutory Sick Pay will not be eligible for new-style Employment and Support Allowance but may still qualify for Universal Credit depending on their circumstances.

■ Independent Case Examiner

Rachael Maskell: [\[15041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints against (a) the child maintenance service and child support agency and (b) her Department were accepted for investigation by the Independent Case Examiner in each year since 2014-15; and how many of those complaints were not investigated for at least 12 months after they were received.

Mims Davies:

The cases that reach the Independent Case Examiner are the most complex and investigations will not be compromised in order to be completed within certain timescales.

We keep people updated about the timings involved with their case and the vast majority of complainants are satisfied with the service they receive.

The table below provides information on the number of Child Maintenance Service (CMS) and Child Support Agency (CSA) complaints that were received and accepted for investigation by the Independent Case Examiners Office in each year since 2014-15, and the number of cases that took longer than 12 months to conclude, from the date they were accepted for examination.

Please note, we are unable to provide information on the number of cases that waited longer than 12 months for an investigation to commence for each year since 2014-15, and have therefore provided details of those cases that took longer than 12 months to conclude, from the point at which they were accepted for investigation.

YEAR APRIL TO MARCH	CSA & CMS COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	CSA & CMS COMPLAINTS ACCEPTED FOR INVESTIGATION	CSA & CMS COMPLAINTS CLEARED	CLEARED CASES THAT TOOK LONGER THAN 12 MONTHS TO CONCLUDE (FROM DATE OF ACCEPTANCE)
2014-15	1169	495	490	14
2015-16	936	448	352	113
2016-17	869	333	380	279
2017-18	896	260	326	279
2018-19	1253	395	342	238
2019-20 (to the end of January 2020)	1099	395	233	160

■ Local Housing Allowance

Stella Creasy:

[\[18795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 February 2020 to Question 14677, on Local Housing Allowance, whether he plans to allocate additional funding to support claimants that are at risk of becoming homeless as a result of being unable to afford the difference between the amount they receive in local

housing allowance and their rent in (a) Walthamstow constituency, (b) other London boroughs and (c) England.

Will Quince:

We recently announced an extra £40 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for 2020/21, helping to tackle the most acute affordability pressures in the private rented sector.

Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in Discretionary Housing Payment funding, enabling local authorities to protect the most vulnerable claimants.

■ Marriage Guidance

Fiona Bruce:

[\[20446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much money has been spent under section 22 of the Family Law Act 1996 on (a) the provision of marriage support services, (b) research into the causes of marital breakdown and (c) research into ways of preventing marital breakdown in each financial year since the Act came into force.

Will Quince:

As policy responsibility for relationship issues has moved between departments several times since 1996, the information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The policy responsibility for relationship issues currently sits with DWP. DWP does not make grants under section 22 of the Family Law Act (1996), however we have funded a range of work to help couples (including those who are married) to improve the quality of their relationships.

Since responsibility for this area moved to DWP, we have spent the following in each financial year:

2014/15 - £7.5m

2015/16 - £11.2m

2016/17 - £6.3m

2017/18 - £5.24m

2018/19 - £15.85m

2019/20 current forecast - £10.2m

Currently, these services are focused on the specific issue of parental conflict, and are delivered through our Reducing Parental Conflict programme.

■ Pension Rights: Cohabitation

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[20391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether his Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to grant unmarried couples the same automatic right to

benefit from their partner's pension in the event of the death of their partner as exists for married couples.

Guy Opperman:

Members of defined contribution schemes are normally able to nominate a beneficiary through an expression of wish form who may be a spouse, an unmarried partner or any other person. Trustees have discretion, but will generally give very significant weight to the member's expressed wish. Where a member purchases an annuity, they nominate a beneficiary at the point of purchase for any survivor's pension to which the contract entitles them.

Spouses of defined benefit occupational pension scheme members do not automatically receive benefits when the member dies. There are no statutory requirements for these schemes to provide a survivor or a nominated beneficiary benefits unless the scheme was contracted out of the additional State Pension, where the scheme provided a pension in place of the additional State Pension.

Contracted out schemes must provide a survivor's Guaranteed Minimum Pension for certain widows, widowers and surviving civil partners, reflecting the provisions in the additional State Pension. Any survivor benefits beyond this are a matter for the scheme rules and the sponsoring employer subject to HMRC tax restrictions. Some schemes may choose to provide survivor benefits for those who are not in a legal partnership, but they are not required to.

There are no plans to extend these requirements beyond the surviving partner of a legal relationship.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Aberavon

Stephen Kinnock: [\[18803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independence payment claimants in Aberavon constituency have had a decision from her Department overturned at Tribunal in each of the last three years.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[18804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employment support allowance claimants in Aberavon constituency have had a decision by her Department overturned at Tribunal in each of the last three years.

Justin Tomlinson:

Of the 8,250 initial decisions following a PIP assessment since PIP was introduced up to June 2019, for claimants from Aberavon Parliamentary Constituency, 9% have been overturned at a tribunal hearing.

Statistics on the number of initial decisions following a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment which have been overturned at a tribunal hearing, for claimants from Aberavon Parliamentary Constituency, are shown in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR OF APPEAL CLEARANCE	NUMBER OF DECISIONS OVERTURNED AT A TRIBUNAL HEARING
2016-17	230
2017-18	240
2018-19	90
Total	560

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Statistics on appeal outcomes in relation to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessments by claim start date and Parliamentary Constituency is available on Stat-Xplore.

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on the number of all PIP and ESA decisions overturned at a tribunal hearing by tribunal venue, available here:

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

■ Personal Independence Payment: Terminal Illnesses

Stephanie Peacock: [\[21301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many terminally people have died while waiting for a decision on their personal independence payment claim in each year since 2009.

Will Quince:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically. Claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) are fast tracked and are currently being cleared within 6 working days.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department.

Between the introduction of PIP in April 2013 and 31st October 2019, the latest date for which published data is available, 143,030 decisions were made on claims which had been registered under SRTI. Of these, 5,470 claimants died prior to a decision being made on their case.

Table: Number of claimants who registered under SRTI and died prior to a decision being made on their case.

CLAIMANT'S YEAR OF DEATH	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS UNDER SRTI WHO DIED PRIOR TO DECISION
2013	760
2014	1,040
2015	840
2016	840
2017	680
2018	780
2019 (to October 31 st)	540
Total	5,470

Notes:

- These figures include claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness and include new claims and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP reassessment claims.
- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- It is possible for claims to transition between Normal and Special Rules during the course of the claimant journey.
- The point of application is taken as the day the claimant registered a claim to PIP as recorded on the PIP computer system.
- This is unpublished data from the PIP computer system's (PIP CS) management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Figures cover claims on which a decision has been made and recorded on the PIP CS on or prior to 31st October 2019. Claims on which a decision has not been entered are excluded.
- Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and cover GB only.

■ Poverty: Children

Claudia Webbe:

[\[18878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on child poverty of the roll-out of universal credit in (a) Leicester East constituency, (b) Leicester and (c) the East Midlands.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit will provide an extra £2.1bn a year once full rolled out, compared to the legacy benefits it replaces. Claimants receive better support to prepare for work, move into work, or to increase earnings. The Universal Credit Work Allowance was increased by £1,000 in April 2019 and means that 2.4m households will keep an extra £630 of income each year.

DWP and HMRC have pre-announced publication of improved Official Statistics on Children in Low Income Families at local area level. These statistics will provide insights of the number of children and the proportion of children living in low income families at constituency level and how these compare over time and across constituencies.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[18879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce child poverty in (a) Leicester and (b) the UK.

Will Quince:

The Government is committed to action that delivers a sustainable long-term solution to child poverty in all areas of the UK, including reforming the benefits system so that it supports employment and higher pay.

There is clear evidence that work, in particular full time work, significantly reduces the risk of being in poverty. For example, there is only a 4% chance of a child being in absolute poverty before housing costs where both parents work full-time, compared to 44% where one or more parents in a couple are in part-time work.

Universal Credit will provide an extra £2.1bn a year once fully rolled out, compared to the legacy benefits it replaces. Claimants receive better support to prepare for work, move into work, or to increase earnings. The Universal Credit Work Allowance was increased by £1,000 in April 2019 and means that 2.4m households will keep an extra £630 of income each year.

Other measures we have taken to support working families include delivering another rise in the National Living Wage - increasing a full-time worker's annual pay by over £2,750 since its introduction, and by nearly £3,700 with the recently announced rise from this April. Our tax changes make basic rate tax payers over £1,200 better off from April 2019, compared with 2010.

DWP and HMRC have pre-announced publication of improved Official Statistics on Children in Low Income Families at local area level. These statistics will provide insights of the number of children and the proportion of children living in low income families at constituency level and how these compare over time and across constituencies.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Marion Fellows: [18644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the value of deductions due to sanctions for benefit payments by parliamentary constituency in (a) the latest period for which figures are available and (b) 2019.

Mims Davies:

The Department has no plans to collate and publish this information.

The latest available statistics on benefit sanctions are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-sanctions-statistics-to-october-2019-experimental>

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [21326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 725, what the locations of the are of the small-scale Proof of Concepts for the warning system; and what the timescales are for (a) those proof of concepts and (b) reporting to the House on her Department's assessment of their effectiveness.

Mims Davies:

The small scale proof of concept took place in South London and we hope to complete the internal evaluation by the Spring at which point further decisions can be made on the next stages.

■ Social Security Benefits: Mental Illness

Tommy Sheppard: [20524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants with mental health conditions in Scotland of (a) universal credit, (b) employment and support allowance and (c) jobseekers allowance have had their payments sanctioned in each year since 2015.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

However, the honourable member can find statistics on the number of individuals in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) with a primary disabling condition in the category Mental or Behavioural Disorder and who received an adverse sanction decision they are available and published at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Social Security Benefits: Suicide

Jim McMahon: [\[20593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of claimants of social security benefits who have died by suicide in the last twelve months for which figures are available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department interacts with millions of people, and among them are some of the most vulnerable people in our society. When we are informed a claimant has, tragically, died as a result of suicide, the Department will investigate. However, the fact that we have carried out a review does not mean that DWP has been found culpable in the circumstances or events leading to a death. This is up to a coroner to establish.

We are continuously improving support and guidance to staff on how best to support vulnerable people, and we are constantly looking at our processes, striving for improvement.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Stephanie Peacock: [\[21302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to start its review of the effect of the six-month rule which prevents terminally ill people who are expected to live longer than six months from having their benefits claims fast-tracked.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is taking forward as a priority its evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life and those with severe conditions. We have made progress on all areas of this work and will be continuing to engage with clinicians and claimants to ensure their views are heard.

■ Universal Credit

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[1180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2020 to Question HL 457 on universal credit, whether her Department plans to evaluate in the Move to universal credit pilot the effect of the managed migration process on disabled people and people with health conditions.

Will Quince:

The Department has already committed to undertaking an evaluation of the Move to UC pilot process. This will include an assessment of how the process works for groups of claimants including those with disabilities and health conditions.

We will be publishing the evaluation strategy for the Move To UC process in Spring 2020.

Angela Crawley:

[\[15094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to bring forward to date to extend the repayment period for universal credit advances to 16 months from October 2021.

Will Quince:

The Department has announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further to 16 months. There are no plans to introduce this earlier.

Claimants can access up to 100% of their total expected Universal Credit monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. Proposed repayments of the advance are explained in advance, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable when considering the repayments required. Work Coaches gauge claimants' financial needs from their first interview. For those who need help with budgeting, we can signpost to additional support, for example through the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), who can help with personal budgeting and money management through its free helpline, printed guides and digital guidance.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[20473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February to Question 15027, whether her Department collects data on the correlation between the number of people borrowing from loan sharks and the roll-out of universal credit in an area.

Will Quince:

The Department does not collect data about the use of loan sharks.

The Government is creating a Breathing Space scheme to help people experiencing problem debt. Breathing Space will be implemented in early 2021 and provide access to advice and allow people the time and space to fully engage with professional support, helping them identify a sustainable solution to their debts. The scheme will cover a broad range of debts, including not only financial services debts but also arrears owed to utility companies and to central and local government.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[20496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 727 on Universal Credit, how much has been paid back to universal credit claimants as a result of Real Time Information disputes being upheld in the most recent 12 months for which data are available.

Will Quince:

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

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[20497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 727 on Universal Credit, how many universal credit claimants successfully disputed the Real Time Information on which their awards were based (a) from February 2016 to January 2017, (b) from February 2017 to January 2018 and (c) from February 2018 to January 2019.

Will Quince:

The Department has been working closely with HMRC since Universal Credit went live in 2013 to support and inform employers who report earnings to emphasise the importance of timely reporting via the Real Time Information (RTI) system.

HMRC have guidance to reiterate to employers the importance of reporting accurate dates and the impact on payment cycles; the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is also working closely with HMRC and employers to encourage accurate reporting dates. Please see the table below for the relevant data on the total successful RTI disputes.

	TOTAL RTI CALCULATIONS	RTI CALCULATION DISPUTES	PERCENTAGE (%) OF DISPUTES TO TOTAL CALCULATIONS	NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL DISPUTES
July 2017 – January 2018	3,902,052	11,133	0.3%	2,226
February 2018 – January 2019	13,566,745	61,246	0.4%	11,636

Notes:

- The earliest available data is from July 2017.

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[21155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which organisation has the responsibility for setting and adjusting the rate of deductions for fixed penalty notices for environmental offences to universal credit claims.

Will Quince:

Fixed penalty notices for environment offences are not deducted from Universal Credit awards.

■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[18787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to paragraph 11 of the Government's response to the Work and Pensions Committee's Nineteenth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 955, what progress her Department has made on undertaking that

evaluation; and whether that evaluation will assess the effectiveness of (a) conditionality and (b) sanctions for lone parents.

Mims Davies:

The Department will look to publish its evaluation in Spring 2020. The evaluation will assess the impact of Universal Credit sanctions on supporting claimants into work.

The impact on lone parents will be assessed. The evaluation will not assess the effectiveness of conditionality.

Tommy Sheppard:

[20525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons the sanction rate for claimants of universal credit is higher than the sanction rate for claimants of (a) jobseekers allowance and (b) employment and support allowance.

Mims Davies:

Whilst the same methodology has been used to produce these statistics, the benefits themselves are very different and require interpretation based on the rules of the specific benefit. It is for this reason that the sanction rate in Universal Credit cannot be compared with the sanction rates in other benefits. For example, under Jobseekers Allowance if a claimant fails to attend a Work Coach meeting their claim would be closed after 5 days if no contact is made. Under Universal Credit, the claimants standard allowance is reduced but they continue to receive other elements of their Universal Credit award which may cover childcare and housing amongst other things. This is to ensure that all payments are not terminated.

■ Universal Credit: Mental Illness and Vulnerable Adults

Tommy Sheppard:

[20522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of universal credit (a) are classed as vulnerable and (b) have a mental health condition.

Will Quince:

The data requested is not available.

Health conditions are not categorised into either physical and mental conditions.

Vulnerabilities can include a range of complex needs and differing personal circumstances and so there is no definitive definition of the term vulnerable.

We do however publish the breakdown of Universal Credit claimants with different work related requirements. This is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/login.xhtml>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

We have listened to feedback on how we can improve Universal Credit to support our claimants and acted quickly, making improvements such as extending advances, removing waiting days, and introducing housing benefit run on. These changes are

giving support to those who need it most, whilst at the same time helping people get into work faster.

Tommy Sheppard: [\[20523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much (a) on average and (b) in total her Department pays in adjustments for universal credit claimants with (i) identified vulnerabilities and (ii) mental health conditions.

Will Quince:

Data surrounding claimants in receipt of different elements of Universal Credit is published online and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy Policy Update

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):

[\[HCWS139\]](#)

I am today confirming details of the next round of the Contracts for Difference scheme, which opens in 2021. The latest round will be open to renewable technologies including onshore wind and solar, with proposals to introduce floating offshore wind. This could see millions more homes powered by clean energy by the end of the decade, and a boost for the supply chain, adding to the 20,600 jobs and the £628million of exports each year already supported by the renewables industry.

Today my Department is publishing a consultation on proposed changes to the Contracts for Difference scheme. We have made huge strides to decarbonise our energy system, moving the power sector away from its reliance on fossil fuels towards a cleaner, greener future. In 2018 the collective share of UK electricity generation from renewable sources was 33%. Our target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050 requires the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

Delivering net zero will require change across the whole of society, and I am therefore more mindful than ever of the importance of meaningful engagement with local communities on the measures in this transition that affect them the most. Local communities will have a more effective voice on developments that impact them, through proposals for tough new guidance on community engagement for developers of onshore wind across Great Britain, also announced today. They will have a definitive say on whether projects are allowed to proceed. It will remain the case that no English onshore wind project can proceed without the consent of the local community.

This challenge means we will need to make the most of multiple technologies available. 2020 is the Year of Climate Action and this decision is a crucial part of the government's plans to go further and faster in tackling climate change. In the same manner I will be encouraging other countries to increase their own ambition ahead of COP26 later this year.

Today's consultation outlines proposals to ensure the Contracts for Difference scheme can support the increased ambition required, including proposals to build on our world-leading position on offshore wind by introducing floating offshore wind into the scheme as well as proposals to support our renewable supply chain to enhance productivity and increase competitiveness.

I will place in the Libraries of the House, copies of the 'Contracts for Difference for Low Carbon Electricity Generation – Consultation on Proposed Amendments to the Scheme' which sets out further information on proposals for engaging communities.

TREASURY

■ The Van Benefit and Car and Van Fuel Benefit Order 2020

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman): [\[HCWS137\]](#)

The van benefit charge and fuel benefit charges for cars and vans will be uprated by the Consumer Price Index from 6 April 2020. The uprate will take effect as follows:

- Van Benefit Charge will uprate from £3,430 to £3,490
- Car Fuel Benefit Charge multiplier will uprate from £24,100 to £24,500
- Van Fuel Benefit Charge will uprate from £655 to £666

This measure is being announced outside of the normal fiscal process to ensure employers and HMRC are given enough time to prepare for the uprate, ahead of the 2020-21 tax year.

The Government will lay the statutory instrument to uprate these charges before the House today. A tax information and impact note (TIIN) will be published at www.gov.uk/government/collections/tax-information-and-impact-notes-tiins.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Announcement on Health and Disability Assessment Services

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Justin Tomlinson): [\[HCWS138\]](#)

I would like to update the House on the Department's plans, under the Health Transformation Programme, to reform assessment services for Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). In March 2019, we announced that we would transition towards an integrated assessment service, with a single digital platform developed by DWP. Today I am pleased to announce the next steps in these plans, which are a key part of this Government's commitment to transform how we support disabled people.

Our claimants include some of the most vulnerable in society and so our approach is based on delivering this complex and important transformation safely and carefully. To that end, we will initially develop the new service on a small scale in a defined part of the country, a Transformation Area .

For claimants in this Transformation Area, assessments will be conducted by the DWP, rather than outsourced to providers. This will give us the flexibility to explore new ideas including:

- trialling better ways of carrying out face-to-face assessments;
- how to triage more effectively so that only those people who need a face-to-face assessment will have to undergo one;

- how to make it easier for claimants to understand the evidence they need to provide and why;
- how to remove the need for claimants to give the same information twice;
- how to ensure that claimants are aware of the whole range of support available to them both from DWP and more widely.

Our ambition in developing the new service is that it captures the experience and insights of those who use the service or who represent users of the service. We have already acted on this and will continue to drive forward engagement on the future of the health and disability agenda through our upcoming Green Paper.

I can also inform the House that today we will be issuing two Prior Information Notices to advise the market that the Department is seeking to procure contracts to deliver PIP and WCA assessments from 1 August 2021 to ensure continuity of service when the current contracts end on 31 July. The Transformation Area will start in Autumn 2021 and operate alongside these contracts. We will work with the successful providers to ensure continuous improvement in their service, including how developments in the Transformation Area can benefit delivery by contracted providers.