



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 5 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:46 P.M., 05 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ British Nationals Abroad: Employment

Alberto Costa:

[\[19877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to encourage highly skilled UK nationals based overseas to return to this country following the UK's departure from the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The rights of UK nationals who wish to continue living in the EU beyond 31st December 2020 have been secured through the Withdrawal Agreement. UK citizens living and working in the EEA or Switzerland by the end of the transition period can bring their close family members back to the UK with them under current conditions, to enable their family members to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, until 29 March 2022, as long as the relationship was formed by 31 January 2020. We will continue to maintain up-to-date guidance on the Gov.uk website for any UK national living abroad who is considering returning to the UK. We would welcome UK nationals of whatever skill level who wish to return to the UK, whether from within or beyond the EU.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Flags

Philip Davies:

[\[21193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department owns the following flags:

(a) Union Jack: 11

(b) St George: 1

(c) Scottish Saltire: 1

(d) Flag of Wales: 1.

Philip Davies:

[\[21936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department always flies the Union Jack. We do not hold records on how many times the St George's flag, Scottish Saltire, and the flag of Wales have been flown.

Thirty-nine flag-flying events have taken place since 2017, with 15 instances where the type of flag flown was recorded.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Prices**

Janet Daby:

[\[22052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that electric vehicles are affordable.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government's current intervention in the electric vehicle market aims to accelerate upfront price parity between electric and internal combustion engine equivalents, making electric vehicles more affordable for all consumers.

We are supporting R&D to ensure that technologies for electric vehicles are developed and brought to market as early as possible. This includes support for power electronics and motors, and the development of battery technology through the £274 million Faraday Battery Challenge.

We are also incentivising demand to allow those technologies to reach the mass market and scale as early as possible. In addition, government grants for plug-in vehicles continue to help reduce the upfront 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 example, all zero emission models will pay no company car tax in 2020-21 and 1% in 2021-22, before returning to the planned 2% rate in 2022-23 – a significant tax saving for employees and employers.

Local authorities may also provide incentives, such as free parking or exemption from the congestion charge.

We stated in our Road to Zero Strategy that consumer incentives will continue to play a role beyond 2020.

■ **Heating: Carbon Emissions**

John Lamont:

[\[23417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's plans are for decarbonising heating systems in existing residential properties.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department is planning to publish a Heat and Building Strategy later this year, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings, including existing residential properties. These include the deployment of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating as part of an ambitious programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions on how we achieve the mass transition to low-carbon heat. We are developing policies to deliver low carbon heating in the 2020s and put us on the pathway to delivering net zero by 2050.

■ Home Energy and Lifestyle Management: Green Deal Scheme**Gavin Newlands:** [\[22403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Deal loan appeals in respect of Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd have been referred to her Department for (a) less than three months, (b) between three and six months, (c) between six and nine months, (d) between nine and twelve months and (e) more than twelve months without a final decision having been made in each (i) constituency, (ii) local authority area and (iii) NUTS first level region.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As of 3rd March 2020, there are 147 outstanding appeals, relating to the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS), which have been referred to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

The Regulations require that, before imposing any sanction, the Secretary of State gives notice to affected parties of his intention to impose a sanction and provides them with an opportunity to make representations before it is made final. To date, 83 Intention Notices have been issued in respect of the outstanding HELMS appeals.

The tables attached provide details of the age of the outstanding appeals, broken down by (i) constituency, (ii) local authority area and (iii) NUTS first level region.

Attachments:

1. Green Deal appeals Home Energy Lifestyle Mgt Ltd. [Green Deal appeal cases about Home Energy Lifestyle Management Ltd.pdf]

■ Offshore Wind Programme Board: Internet**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[21357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2013 to Question 164613 on Wind Power, for what reason the Offshore Wind Programme Board's pages on the Crown Estate website referred to in that Answer have been removed.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Crown Estate is an independent commercial business, created by Act of Parliament and the Department does not manage the Crown Estate website. I am therefore unable to answer a question relating to that.

■ Post Office: Civil Proceedings**Marion Fellows:** [\[23510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many branches involved in the recent group litigation against Post Office Ltd are directly managed by Post Office Ltd.

Marion Fellows: [\[23511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) sub-postmasters, (b) staff of sub-postmasters, (c) staff of Post Office Ltd, (d) managerial staff and (e) other staff were involved in the recent group litigation against Post Office Ltd.

Marion Fellows: [\[23514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the effect of the faulty Horizon IT system on the annual revenue of each Post Office branch.

Marion Fellows: [\[23516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many cases of accounting faults with the Horizon IT system Post Office Ltd has been made aware of in each year since the introduction of that system.

Marion Fellows: [\[23517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many individual legal cases have been brought against Post Office Ltd (a) in full and (b) in part as a result of (i) accounting and (ii) other faults with the Horizon IT system in each of the last 25 years.

Marion Fellows: [\[23519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in which constituencies the post office branches involved in the recent group litigation against Post Office Ltd are based.

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. Details regarding constituencies, branches, postmasters and number of legal cases involved in the Horizon litigation 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 this matter. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ Post Office: ICT**Marion Fellows:** [\[23520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions his Department has had with Post Office Ltd on the Horizon IT system; and the purpose of those discussions was.

Paul Scully:

Ministers and officials have very frequent conversations with Post Office Limited. These have covered a range of issues including the Horizon system and the follow-on actions that Post Office Ltd needs to take as a result of the recent court judgments.

It is important that Government takes the Post Office's relationship with postmasters very seriously and closely monitors the situation. The Post Office, through its new CEO has since accepted he got things wrong. He has apologised and said it aims at establishing a positive relationship with its postmasters. BEIS is working actively with the Post Office on this matter and will hold them to account on their progress.

■ Post Offices: ICT**Chris Elmore:**[\[23552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the individual losses faced by sub-postmasters due to errors in the Horizon accounting system.

Paul Scully:

Postmasters are key to the work of the Post Office, and their branches are vital to communities across the country. That is why Government takes POL's relationship with its postmasters very seriously.

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 encompassed by this litigation, including the relationship between POL and its postmasters, is operational to Post Office Limited. I have asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon Member about this matter. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Chris Elmore:[\[23558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's management of the Post Office since the roll-out of the Horizon accounting system in 2000.

Paul Scully:

While publicly owned and accountable to Government for its decisions, Post Office Ltd operates as an independent, commercial business and management of the roll-out of the Horizon accounting system falls within the scope of the Post Office's responsibilities.

Since 2004, United Kingdom Government Investments, previously known as the Shareholder Executive, has acted as Shareholder Representative for BEIS, overseeing POL's corporate governance, strategy, and the stewardship of POL's financial resources on behalf of the shareholder. Prior to 2004, this role was carried out by the Department for Trade and Industry.

It is important that Government takes the Post Office's relationship with postmasters very seriously and closely monitors the situation. The Post Office, through its new CEO has since accepted he got things wrong. He has apologised and said it aims at establishing a positive relationship with its postmasters. BEIS is working actively with the Post Office on this matter and will hold them to account on their progress.

■ **Scottish Limited Partnerships: Ownership**

Alison Thewliss: [\[23490\]](#)

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

Paul Scully:

Companies House considers 10,800 of the Scottish Limited Partnerships ('SLPs') on the register to be active. Of these, 948 SLPs have not filed PSC information as at 31st January 2020.¹ This compares to 2,019 in January 2019 and 7,078 in January 2018.

■ **Wind Power: Seas and Oceans**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[21353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 13545, on Wind Power: Seas and Oceans, what steps his Department's representative on the Offshore Wind Programme Board has taken to verify the UK content figures reported by developers.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK content data supplied by each developer is compiled on an anonymised basis by RenewableUK to an agreed methodology. The Department has the ability to commission the independent auditing of the data.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[21354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 13545, on Wind Power: Seas and Oceans, when the Offshore Wind Industrial Council plans to publish its latest assessment of UK content.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

UK content figures for wind farms are compiled and published by the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC). The Department has asked the Offshore Wind Industry Council for an update on the UK content figures this year.

Charlotte Nichols: [\[21355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 13545, on Wind Power: Seas and Oceans, whether his Department collects data on progress towards the offshore wind industry's target of 60 per cent UK content by 2030.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department monitors the progress of each commitment within the Offshore Wind Sector Deal and regular collection of data helps keep track of progress. The Offshore Wind Industrial Council undertakes monitoring of progress against the UK content target.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Civil Servants: Work Experience**

Bridget Phillipson: [\[23444\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of interns each Government Department accepted to the (a) Summer Diversity Internship Programme and (b) Civil Service graduate fast stream in each year since 2015 were (a) female, (b) male or (c) identified as neither.

Chloe Smith:

As both the Summer Diversity Internship Programme and the Civil Service graduate fast stream are cross-Civil Service programmes, the information requested is not broken down by department.

Information relating to gender for those recommended for appointment to the Summer Diversity Internship Programme and Civil Service graduate Fast Stream in each year since 2015 is available in the relevant Civil Service Fast Stream [annual reports](#).

■ **Honours: Equality**

Seema Malhotra: [\[23471\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to increase diversity in the (a) nomination for and (b) award of UK honours.

Chloe Smith:

Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve diversity in the honours system. For example, we now consistently see around half of awards overall going to women, and in the New Year 2020 Honours List, 51% of honours went to women. Around 10% of awards go to recipients from a BAME background. The Cabinet Office will consider whether further steps to improve diversity and representation are required. We welcome more nominations from under-represented regions and we are running a programme of regional events to promote the system in those areas most under-represented.

■ **Ministers: Conduct**

Tim Farron: [\[23477\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, who enforces the Ministerial Code against the Prime Minister; and what the process is of that enforcement.

Chloe Smith:

Paragraph 1.6 of the Ministerial Code sets out that Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the Code and for justifying their actions and conduct to Parliament and the public.

The Ministerial Code should be read against the background of the overarching duty on Ministers to comply with the law and to protect the integrity of public life.

Ms Angela Eagle:[\[23506\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, who will lead the inquiry into alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code by the Home Secretary.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in response to an Urgent Question in the House of Commons on 2 March 2020 ([Official Record, Vol. 672, Col. 611/612](#)).

Office for Disability Issues**Paul Maynard:**[\[21214\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason responsibility for the Office for Disability Issues was transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Equalities Hub in the Cabinet Office.

Paul Maynard:[\[21215\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many full-time equivalent staff work in the Disability Unit of the Equalities Hub.

Chloe Smith:

The Office for Disability Issues transferred to Cabinet Office from the Department for Work and Pensions in November 2019 through a Machinery of Government change.

Details of the change were set out in a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) at the time.

As of the end of February 2020, there are 23.6 FTE equivalents working in the Disability Unit at the Cabinet Office.

DEFENCE**Type 31 Frigates: Crew****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for (a) recruitment and (b) training of Type 31 Frigate staff.

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.

All training in defence follows the Defence Systems Approach to Training process to ensure the right people are trained to the right standard on new or existing equipment.

■ **Type 31 Frigates: Iron and Steel**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[21163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it is his Department's policy for the Type 31 to have cut steel for the first time in 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

Yes, on current plans the steel will be cut for the first of the five Type 31 Frigates in 2021.

■ **Type 31 Frigates: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[22373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18618 on Type 31 Frigates, when initial operating capability will be achieved for the Type 31 Frigate.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[22374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18618, when full operating capability will be achieved for the Type 31 Frigate.

Jeremy Quin:

The first Type 31 Frigate will be in the water in 2023 and all five ships will be delivered by the end of 2028. The approved in service date for the first Type 31 is May 2027.

The dates for Initial Operating Capability and Full Operating Capability have not yet been determined.

■ **VE Day: Anniversaries**

Seema Malhotra: [\[23472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to support VE day celebrations in local communities.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence will be supporting a number of regional events through the provision of Service personnel, Armed Forces' bands and aircraft for flypasts. Service personnel will be present in local parades and processions across the UK and the Channel Islands. The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight are planning to carry out flypasts over at least 90 events on Friday 8 May 2020 and a further 70 during the weekend of 9-10 May 2020.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Creative Europe: Membership**

Daisy Cooper: [\[21316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to negotiate the UK's continued membership of Creative Europe from 2021.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government is committed to supporting the UK's thriving cultural and creative economy, and will continue to invest in the UK's cultural and creative sectors to support their world-class activity on the international stage. While the Government has made the decision not to seek participation in Creative Europe's 2021-27 programme, we will consider domestic alternatives in the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. It should be noted that current UK beneficiaries will continue to benefit from EU programmes for the lifetime of the project, which in some cases goes beyond 2020.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Flags

Philip Davies: [\[21195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Department owns the following:

- a) 260 Union Flags plus 114 Union Banners for flying in Windsor
- b) 27 Flags of St George
- c) 1 Scottish Saltire
- d) 1 Flag of Wales

Philip Davies: [\[21938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Union flag is generally flown everyday above the DCMS offices. For certain occasions we fly other flags including the Commonwealth Flag, Merchant Navy Flag, Rainbow Flag, Armed Forces Flag, Transgender Flag and Red Ribbon Flag.

We have flown the Flag of St George on St George's Day since 2007. We also fly the Home Nations flags in support of England, Scotland or Wales when they reach the latter stages of major sporting events.

■ Migrant Workers: EU Nationals

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[21288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) EU and (b) non-EU nationals employed in the creative arts industries.

Caroline Dinenge:

The department produces annual employment statistics for the creative industries, published as part of DCMS's economic estimates. The numbers of EU and non-EU nationals employed in the creative industries in 2018 are given in the table below. Overall, employees in the creative industries are 85.8% UK, 7.4% EU and 6.8% non-EU nationals.

Creative Industries employment by subsector in 2018, 000s [1]

SUB-SECTOR	UK	EU [2]	Non-EU
1. Advertising and marketing	168	15	12
2. Architecture	96	-	-
3. Crafts	9	-	-
4. Design and designer fashion	143	11	-
5. Film, TV, video, radio and photography	219	19	8
6. IT, software and computer services	604	50	78
7. Publishing	164	24	11
8. Museums, Galleries and Libraries	80	-	-
9. Music, performing and visual arts	268	17	12
Creative Industries	1,750	150	139

Source: DCMS Economic Estimates, Employment 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-2018-employment>

Notes

1. Estimates rounded to the nearest 1,000.
2. Does not include UK nationals

Notation

"-" Figure has been suppressed due to disclosiveness

■ **Suicide: Internet**

Ellie Reeves:

[20634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to tackle suicide chat forums since the death of Callie Lewis.

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.

■ **Transparency Working Group**

Justin Madders:

[22402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions the Minister for Digital and Broadband has had with the transparency working group.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with stakeholders including those at the multi-stakeholder Transparency Working Group. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

The Transparency Working Group includes representatives from a wide range of organisations with an interest in transparency reporting in relation to online harms. The first meeting of the Transparency Working Group was chaired by the Minister for Digital and Broadband. Following the recent change in ministerial portfolios, the group will now be chaired by the Minister for Digital and Culture.

This group will feed into the government's transparency report, which was announced in the Online Harms White Paper and which we intend to publish in the coming months.

■ Video Games: Sales**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[22009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of age restrictions on the sale of video games.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[22010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce sanctions for video game manufacturers that do not take reasonable steps to limit the exposure of children to age inappropriate content.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Video Standards Council (VSC) applies the independently determined Pan-European Games Information (PEGI) classification system on behalf of industry in order to provide objectivity and consistency in video games age ratings. The VSC's classification work is reviewed by Government as part of the assessment of their Annual Report.

We are in frequent dialogue with the VSC about their work and on how we can ensure that children are better protected from inappropriate content. This includes working with them on a call to industry to adopt PEGI ratings for every online game.

The government also continues to work with industry and the age ratings bodies to help consumers learn about parental controls available on devices, including through initiatives such as AskAboutGames and PEGI advice about safe gaming.

EDUCATION**■ Asylum: Children in Care****Steve McCabe:** [\[23586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were looked after by (a) care placement and (b) legal status as at 31 March 2019.

Vicky Ford:

Figures on the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children by care placement and legal status at 31 March 2019 are shown in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. 23586_Table [23586_Looked_After_Unaccompanied_Asylum_Seeking_Children.xls]

Steve McCabe: [\[23587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, who has parental responsibility for unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children who are in care on a voluntary agreement under section 20 of the Children's Act 1989.

Steve McCabe: [23588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how his Department (a) monitors and (b) quality assesses local authority pathway planning for unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children in care.

Steve McCabe: [23589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has published for children's social care on how to support unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children through the asylum and immigration system.

Steve McCabe: [23590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what specialist mental health support is available for unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children in care.

Vicky Ford:

Under s20 of the Children Act 1989 the local authority has a statutory responsibility to accommodate unaccompanied, asylum seeking children (UASC). Where the child is accommodated for more than 24 hours they become a 'looked after' child and the local authority where the child presents has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the child's welfare in the same way as any other looked after child.

Ofsted, as part of its children's services inspection framework, monitor and quality assess local authority processes in relation to all looked after children and care leavers. This will include an assessment of pathway planning.

The statutory guidance 'Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery' and 'Children Act 1989: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers' set out how local authorities should appropriately pathway plan in a way that meets the needs of unaccompanied care leavers. This guidance is available at the following links:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/656429/UASC_Statutory_Guidance_2017.pdf and
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397649/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf.

The statutory guidance 'Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery' also sets out how local authorities should appropriately care plan for UASC in accordance with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. The regulations apply to all looked after children, regardless of their immigration status, nationality or documentation.

The statutory guidance makes clear that social workers' knowledge of the asylum process should include an understanding of the child's asylum process, the purpose of the asylum case review and the different possible outcomes of a child's asylum claim and how that impacts on pathway planning. Social workers should also have a broad understanding of the immigration system. In addition, the department is developing bespoke materials for social workers to support their understanding of the asylum process. These materials are currently being tested by a sample of local

authorities prior to wider dissemination across England. We have also commissioned the No Recourse to Public Fund Network to produce guidance on pathway planning for unaccompanied adolescents who are care leavers.

As part of the care planning process, local authorities must carry out a health assessment of all their looked after children. The Regulations and Statutory Guidance 'Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked-After Children' makes clear that an assessment should include the child's emotional and mental health needs and this must be reviewed regularly. Statutory guidance also makes clear that for unaccompanied children, the health assessment should ascertain any physical, psychological or emotional impact of experiences as an unaccompanied child or child victim of modern slavery. Any past trauma or experiences should be noted, along with any consequential need for psychological or mental health support to help the child deal with them. Mental health provision is provided at a local level.

■ Children: Social Services

Dame Diana Johnson:

[21914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department provided to the children's social services department at Kingston upon Hull City Council (a) during the period that those services were graded by Ofsted as requires improvement, (b) since those services were graded by Ofsted as inadequate in January 2019 and (c) since the monitoring visit by Ofsted on 14 January 2020.

Vicky Ford:

Over the course of 2018, the Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director for Hull City Council met with the regional lead for Yorkshire and the Humber on several occasions to discuss support. During this time, Hull City Council was in receipt of support from North Yorkshire County Council as a Partner in Practice (PiP), funded by the Department for Education. In February 2019, Hull City Council had also paid for support from another PiP, Essex County Council.

In May 2019, the Department issued an improvement notice and appointed an improvement adviser, Paul Moffat, to support and challenge Hull City Council's improvement journey in line with established policy set out in the 'Putting Children First' guidance, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/putting-children-first-our-vision-for-childrens-social-care>.

Mr Moffat was previously the Chief Executive of Doncaster Children's Services Trust. He has a strong background in improving children's services, taking Doncaster's Children's Services Trust's Ofsted rating from 'Inadequate' to 'Good' in three years. The Department also funded North Yorkshire County Council and Essex County Council in 2019 to provide support to Hull City Council on a number of areas.

Since the monitoring visit in January 2020, Mr Moffat has continued to work closely with Hull City Council.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[21916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what role his Department had in the appointment of the interim director of children's services at Kingston upon Hull City Council.

Vicky Ford:

Hull City Council took the decision to remove the Director of Children's Services (DCS) from her post after the Ofsted monitoring visit in January 2020. It was also the Council's decision to appoint a new leadership team. The Department had no role in the appointment of the interim DCS.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[21917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the outcomes of the SEND local area inspection and inspection of children's social care services at Kingston upon Hull City Council, whether his Department has provided (a) staff and (b) financial support to that local authority to improve children's services.

Vicky Ford:

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

The Department for Education has not provided any funding directly to the local authority to improve Children's Social Care. Prior to the May 2019 Ofsted inspection report, the regional lead for Yorkshire and the Humber met with Hull City Council on several occasions to discuss support. During this time, Hull City Council was in receipt of support from North Yorkshire County Council as a Partner in Practice (PiP), funded by the Department. In February 2019, Hull City Council also paid for support from another PiP, Essex County Council.

In May 2019, the Department issued an improvement notice and appointed an improvement adviser, Paul Moffat, to support and challenge Hull City Council's improvement journey in line with established policy set out in the 'Putting Children First' guidance, which is available here:

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Mr Moffat was previously the Chief Executive of Doncaster Children's Services Trust. He has a strong background in improving children's services, taking Doncaster's Children's Services Trust's Ofsted rating from 'Inadequate' to 'Good' in three years. The Department also funded North Yorkshire County Council and Essex County Council to provide support to Hull City Council on a number of areas, equating to an investment of approximately £80,000 in 2019-20.

The joint Ofsted and CQC special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) local area revisit to Kingston upon Hull in October 2019, published on 23 December 2019, found that sufficient improvement had been made in two out of the four significant weaknesses identified in the October 2017 inspection. In 2018-19, the Department provided Kingston upon Hull with a SEND implementation grant of £140,968 to

support the implementation of the SEND reforms. The Department has also funded training and resources from delivery partners, including Whole School SEND, Contact and the Council for Disabled Children, and a dedicated SEND adviser to provide support and challenge to the local area to improve their SEND services.

■ Culture: Education

Alex Norris: [\[23509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help schools improve the cultural literacy of pupils aged four and five.

Nick Gibb:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework sets out the learning and development requirements which all early years settings and schools are required to follow. This ensures all children from birth to five are supported throughout the EYFS and attain a good level of development - at the end of reception- ready to begin Year 1. This provides a firm basis for cultural literacy through the seven areas of learning: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design.

The Department's proposed reforms to the EYFS, including revisions to the curriculum activities and assessment goals under the seven areas of learning, are intended to improve early language and literacy outcomes for all children - particularly those from a disadvantaged background. The reforms provide opportunities for teachers to support children's cultural literacy through reading from a range of fiction and non-fiction books, singing rhymes and poems and visits to parks, museums and libraries. Strengthening teaching practice in these areas can enable all children to flourish as they move through school and beyond.

■ Department for Education: Flags

Philip Davies: [\[21197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

Nick Gibb:

The Department owns one of each of the flags.

■ Disabled Students' Allowances: Higher Education

Catherine West: [\[21347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to (a) allocate the disabled student allowance funding directly to Higher Education Providers (HEP's) and (b) require those HEPs to ringfence that funding for support of disabled students.

Michelle Donelan:

No decision has been made to allocate Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) directly to Higher Education Providers.

The government always keeps the DSAs system under review, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and provides good value for money. We are considering the recommendations made on DSAs in the Tailored Review of the Student Loans Company.

■ Literacy: Children**Alex Norris:**[\[23507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of synthetic phonics lessons on children's reading outcomes since the introduction of the Phonics Partnership Grant programme in 2015.

Alex Norris:[\[23515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of teaching synthetic phonics on the attainment gap between (a) advantaged and disadvantaged students and (b) boys and girls.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards by ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding.

Evidence has shown that phonics is a highly effective component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our phonics performance is improving. In 2019, 82% of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the phonics screening check, compared to just 58% when the check was introduced in 2012. The disadvantage gap in the phonics screening check has decreased from 17% in 2012, to 14% in 2019. The gender gap in the phonics screening check has fallen from 8% in 2012 to 7% in 2019.

England achieved its highest ever score in reading in 2016, moving from joint 10th to joint 8th in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) rankings. This follows a greater focus on reading in the primary curriculum, and a particular focus on phonics. The average improvement of England's pupils in 2016 is largely attributable to two changes:

- In 2016, boys have significantly improved in their average performance compared to previous cycles; and
- England's lowest performing pupils have substantially improved compared to previous PIRLS cycles, which has narrowed the gap between the higher and lower-performing pupils.

Building on the success of our phonics partnerships and phonics roadshows programmes, in 2018, the Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs

Programme. We have appointed 34 primary schools across England as English Hubs. The English Hubs programme is supporting nearly 3000 schools across England to improve their teaching of reading through systematic synthetic phonics, early language development, and reading for pleasure. The English Hubs are focused on improving educational outcomes for the most disadvantaged pupils in Reception and Year 1.

■ Music: Education

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[23466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of funding for music in schools between 2014 and 2019.

Nick Gibb:

The Department believes that music is an important subject and that all pupils should receive a high-quality music education. That is why the subject is compulsory in the National Curriculum up to age 14.

Music education is primarily the responsibility of schools. To support schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, the Department announced an increase in investment for schools across England of £14 billion over the next three years at the 2019 Spending Round, with increases of £2.6 billion to core schools funding in 2020-21, and further increases of £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively. On top of this we are providing £1.5 billion for the additional pension costs for teachers, bringing the total core schools budget to £52.2 billion by 2022-23.

To support schools deliver high-quality music education for all their pupils, the Department has provided funding of over £300 million for music education hubs between 2016 and 2020, including £76 million in 2019-20. This is a significant increase from the £58 million hubs received in 2014.

In early January, we announced further funding of £85 million for music and arts in 2020-21; £80 million for music hubs coupled with further investment in film, dance, theatre and design. The Department has also confirmed that an arts premium will be provided to secondary schools to fund enriching activities for all pupils. Work is underway to develop the arts premium and we will be making further statements on this in due course.

■ Secondary Education: Bromley

Ellie Reeves:

[\[21343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) effectiveness of consultation periods used by schools to consult parents on proposals to establish feeder arrangements.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[21344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the increase in the number of secondary school places in Bromley in each of the next five years; and

what assessment he has made of the potential effect of feeder school arrangements on that increase.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[21345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on freedom of secondary school choice for primary schools pupils not in a feeder school in Bromley of the Harris Federation and Langley Park Learning Trust setting up feeder arrangements.

Nick Gibb:

School admission arrangements must comply with the School Admissions Code. The Code permits admission arrangements which give priority to children who attend named feeder schools. It also requires that the selection of feeder schools is transparent and made on reasonable grounds. In addition, the Code requires that admission arrangements are fair.

The School Admissions Code requires admission authorities to consult locally before making changes to their admission arrangements. They must consult for a minimum of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January in the school year before the arrangements come into effect. The Code specifies the people and organisations that the admission authority must consult. This includes local parents, other local schools and the local authority.

The admission authority must then determine its admission arrangements by 28 February and publish them on its website. Anyone who considers the determined admission arrangements are unlawful or unfair may complain to the Schools Adjudicator. Where the Adjudicator upholds a complaint, the admission authority is required to amend their admission arrangements.

In the Office of the Schools Adjudicator's annual report for the 2016-17 school year, the Adjudicator stated, 'If the giving of priority by a secondary school to children from certain feeder primaries means that other children will face a significantly longer or more difficult journey to different schools as a result, then the arrangements are likely to be found to be unfair.' The report is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/osa-annual-report>.

The Department collects pupil forecasts from each local authority through the annual school capacity survey. The latest published data relates to the position in the 2017-18 school year. Secondary pupil numbers in Bromley local authority are forecast to increase by 3,214 (12%) from 23,618 in 2019-20 to 26,832 in 2024-25, as seen in the table below.

Table 1: Secondary pupil forecasts for Bromley local authority

SCHOOL YEAR	BROMLEY LOCAL AUTHORITY SECONDARY PUPIL TOTAL
2019-20	23,618

SCHOOL YEAR	BROMLEY LOCAL AUTHORITY SECONDARY PUPIL TOTAL
2020-21	24,415
2021-22	25,281
2022-23	25,991
2023-24	26,561
2024-25	26,832

Further information can be found in the place planning tables at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-capacity-academic-year-2017-to-2018>.

■ Special Educational Needs: Kingston Upon Hull

Dame Diana Johnson:

[21915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken in response to the outcome of the SEND local area inspection of Kingston upon Hull City Council by the CQC and Ofsted that took place in October 2019.

Vicky Ford:

The joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission special educational needs and disabilities local area revisit to Kingston upon Hull in October 2019, published on 23 December 2019, found that sufficient improvement had been made in two out of the four significant weaknesses identified in the October 2017 inspection.

The Department for Education is clear that progress with addressing the remaining weaknesses must be accelerated. The Department requested leaders of local areas to submit an updated action plan setting out how they will achieve this.

This action plan must be co-produced with partners. It should state how the local area will report on progress and impact, as well as how partners, including families, will be kept fully aware and informed of progress.

The Department will review the plan with partners, including NHS England, as part of our assessment of the most appropriate actions that will bring about the required improvement in services.

■ Students: Compensation

Alex Sobel:

[21388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage universities to financially compensate students affected by industrial action.

Michelle Donelan:

We expect Higher Education Providers to consider their obligations under consumer law and students' consumer rights carefully, including during industrial action. This includes ensuring that a range of appropriate remedies and mitigations are available, which may include financial compensation, to prevent and minimise the effects of any strike action upon their students

The Office for Students, the regulator for higher education in England, has issued guidance for students affected by industrial action. It encourages students to discuss with their university or college whether it is possible to make up for any lost teaching, and whether any other loss of services and support can be rearranged to minimise the disruption that students have experienced. Where lost teaching has had an impact on assessments or other work that has had to be submitted, students may be able to submit a claim for this to be considered as part of the university's mitigating or extenuating circumstances process.

If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, students can complain through the university's complaints process; if they are unhappy with the outcome, students have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA has also published guidance on its website about its approach to complaints by students affected by the industrial action.

Universities: Industrial Disputes**Alex Sobel:**[\[21389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Higher Education (Higher Amount) (England) Regulations 2010 on industrial action at universities in England.

Michelle Donelan:

There are currently two industrial disputes affecting higher education in England. The Universities Superannuation Scheme pension dispute relates to the scheme valuation, costs and governance. The second dispute is about pay, gender and racial pay gaps as well as contracts and working conditions. Universities are independent institutions and are responsible for their own decisions on pay, employment contracts and pension provision.

Government has made no specific assessment of the potential effect of the Higher Education (Higher Amount) (England) Regulations 2010 on these disputes. Those regulations prescribed the higher amounts of tuition fees for courses starting on or after 1 September 2012. Following the passage of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, fee limits for prescribed courses are now provided for in the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2018 and the Higher Education (Fee Limits for Accelerated Courses) (England) Regulations 2019 (in those regulations where the first academic year began on or after 1 August 2019).

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Air Pollution: Greater London**

Theresa Villiers: [\[23617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to the Mayor of London in each of the last 10 years to improve air quality.

Rebecca Pow:

The Mayor of London is responsible for air quality in the capital and has reserve powers under Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) to reflect this. Under the Environment Act the Mayor may direct the boroughs in the Greater London area concerning how they should assess and prioritise action in their areas.

London received funding for air quality as part of the 2015 £5.7 billion Transport for London funding settlement and has also received further funding for specific projects totalling almost £147 million.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Luke Pollard: [\[21403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many holdings were tested for bovine tuberculosis using interferon gamma testing; how many animals were tested in each of those holdings using interferon gamma tests; and of those animals tested, how many tested positive in each county of England in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

Monthly reports on Interferon-Gamma testing for Bovine TB are published on gov.uk, and can be found at <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/f48e8d0a-f527-4f69-8aff-b07db7c26f09/interferon-gamma-testing-for-bovine-tuberculosis-monthly-reports-from-april-2016>.

The number of holdings on which cattle were Interferon-Gamma tested in 2019 was 933.

Ben Lake: [\[23667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to roll out the use of the actiphage test for bovine TB in cattle.

Victoria Prentis:

The tuberculin skin test continues to be the foundation of our bovine TB eradication programme, supplemented by the interferon-gamma blood test to remove residual infection in affected herds.

Actiphage is a non-validated test. Defra allows the use of non-validated tests in chronic and persistent TB breakdown herds in England under certain conditions. Private veterinarians are able to apply to APHA for permission to use these tests,

provided they comply with the protocol published on the APHA Vet Gateway - <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/non-valid-tb-testing/index.htm>.

There is currently insufficient information on the diagnostic performance of the Actiphage test. In order for it to be validated, further studies with larger sample sizes taken from a range of cattle herds of different TB status would be required to assess its diagnostic accuracy.

Validation of a new test to international (World Animal Health Organisation - OIE) standards would enable consideration to be given to its statutory use as part of the Government's bTB testing programme.

A factsheet on the Actiphage test is available on the TB hub website:

<https://tbhub.co.uk/resources/downloads/>

■ Coal: Heating

Mr Richard Holden:

[23621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the Government proposes to ban the burning of coal when its emissions levels are similar to that of burning dry wood.

Rebecca Pow:

As outlined in our written ministerial statement of 24 February 2020 the purpose of our policy is to reduce people's exposure to the most harmful pollutant to human health (PM2.5). While defined by its size, fine particulate matter in smoke from domestic combustion contains a wide range of chemical compounds, depending on what is being burnt. In developing this policy we have taken into account the clear advice of the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, which has stated that emissions from coal combustion is a known carcinogen to humans. There is also strong evidence that burning coal can release elements and compounds into the indoor environment that are particularly harmful to human health. Based on this evidence, the World Health Organization has strongly recommended against the residential use of coal for heating.

Mr Richard Holden:

[23622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will remove coal from the proposed regulation of the sales, distribution and marketing of house coal and wet wood.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to protecting human health, and the environment from the impacts of air pollutants. Based on the advice from the World Health Organization that emissions from coal combustion is a known human carcinogen, and that it should not be used for residential heating, we intend to continue including bituminous (house) coal in the proposed regulation of the sales, distribution and marketing of bituminous (house) coal and wet wood.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[23650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the average change in costs per household of a switch from house coal to smokeless fuel in (a) Northumberland, (b) County Durham, (c) Yorkshire, (d) Cornwall and (e) Hampshire.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra commissioned analysis of heat output from a range of fuels to determine fuel efficiency and costs to consumers. The costs of fuels were investigated across six regions in England (North East, North West, Midlands, South East including East of England, and South West) which showed that manufactured solid fuels were, in general, cheaper when heat output was taken into consideration on an open fire.

■ **Dangerous Dogs****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[21903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 2 April 2019 to Question 237055, when his Department plans to publish its research on responsible dog ownership completed in collaboration with Middlesex University.

Victoria Prentis:

The Defra funded research being carried out by Middlesex University on responsible dog ownership will be published in due course.

■ **Floods: South Yorkshire****Dan Jarvis:**[\[R\] \[23628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using river and canal dredging to tackle the flooding in South Yorkshire.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's flood risk management work focuses on where it delivers the greatest benefit to people and property. Dredging and other work to improve the river channel's ability to carry increased flow (conveyance) often forms an important part of the Environment Agency's (EA's) maintenance regime. However the effectiveness of dredging in managing flood risk varies substantially for each stretch of river, depending on local conditions, and can actually make flooding worse if flows are quickened to towns and villages downstream. The EA assesses its value on a location-by-location basis, in consultation with local communities and organisations such as Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) where appropriate.

The merits of dredging to tackle flooding in South Yorkshire are limited. The surrounding land and bed of the lower reaches of the river Don are flat with a very low gradient, meaning water drains slowly, and they are at or below sea level, which further slows drainage. If riverbeds were dredged lower than sea level, they would simply fill with water and would not reduce flood levels.

■ Fuels: Heating**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[23652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the PM_{2.5} emissions in grams per tonne are for (a) household coal, (b) wet wood, (c) kiln dried or seasoned wood and (d) oil for household use.

Rebecca Pow:

The data is provided as grams per kilogram (rather than grams per tonne) due to the scale of the data, for example for PM_{2.5} emissions from coal, 8.7g/kg would become 8700g/tonne)

The PM_{2.5} emissions in grams per kilogram of fuel used are:

(a) Household coal: 8.7g/kg

(b) Wet Wood: 28g/kg

(c) Dry wood: 7.2g/kg

(d) Oil for households (referred to as 'burning oil' in the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory): 0.083g/kg

■ Pets: Travel**Luke Pollard:**[\[22430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the transport of pets by companies that do not have the required authorisation.

Victoria Prentis

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) take the following action where unauthorised pet transporters are identified during inspections:

Where the transporter originates from an EU Member State, a notification under Article 26 of EU Regulation 1/2005 is sent to that Member State.

Where the transporter is based within Great Britain, APHA will advise the transporter of authorisation requirements and alert the home local authority for where the transporter is based.

If welfare issues are identified during transport, APHA will take action to safeguard the welfare of animals, and where appropriate, engage the relevant local authority who act as our enforcement partner

■ Solid Fuels: Heating**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[23651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of carbon dioxide emissions in grams per tonne of (a) coal, (b) wet wood, (c) kiln dried or seasoned wood and (d) oil for household use burned at home.

Rebecca Pow:

The data is provided as grams per kilogram (rather than grams per tonne) due to the scale of the data. It should be noted that harvested wood for bioenergy is considered to be carbon neutral, with the carbon dioxide (CO₂) absorbed as young trees grow compensating for that released by burning.

The CO₂ emissions in grams per kilogram of fuel used are:

(a) Household coal: 683g/kg

(b) Wet Wood: 0g/kg

(c) Dry wood: 0g/kg

(d) Oil for households (referred to as 'burning oil' in the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory): 859g/kg

■ Trade Agreements: Carbon Emissions**Fleur Anderson:**[\[23412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that trade negotiations contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of food production.

Rebecca Pow:

We believe that environmental sustainability should be at the heart of global production and trade, and are committed to upholding our environmental standards and supporting global decarbonisation. We are exploring all options in future trade agreements to ensure that future trade is sustainable.

We are clear that trade doesn't have to come at the expense of the environment and nothing in our trade deals will prevent us delivering our commitment to net zero by 2050.

■ Tree Planting**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[21904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the terms of the English Tree Strategy consultation will be published; and what the timescale of that public consultation will be.

Rebecca Pow:

The English Tree Strategy consultation will be launched in spring. We will consult into the summer for up to three months to inform the final strategy which we will publish in the autumn.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ British Nationals Abroad: Detainees****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[22420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) location of UK citizens detained in countries where there have been reported outbreaks of Covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office publish consular data on assistance provided to British nationals, including the number and location of arrest and detention cases overseas. Data for 2020, by month, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-commonwealth-office-consular-data-2020>. Where the figures are 5 or fewer, we do not publish a breakdown of the numbers, as this risks identifying the individuals involved.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[22421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support British citizens detained in other countries with cases of covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

Protecting British citizens at home and abroad is a top priority for this government. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is monitoring coronavirus throughout the world closely through its diplomatic network and consular officials continue to provide consular assistance to British nationals in detention overseas, including in countries which have reported cases of Covid-19. Where travel restrictions make visiting difficult, staff will aim to continue to monitor the welfare of British national detainees.

■ Cameroon: Homicide**Emily Thornberry:**[\[21920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Cameroonian counterpart on (a) the massacre in Ngar-buh massacre in February 2020 and (b) allegations of intimidation of Jack Andrew Pendleton, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in that country.

James Duddridge:

The British Government remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. We have consistently called for an end to the violence, and for investigations into all reports of human rights violations. On 19 February, I issued a statement about the appalling

attacks on 14 February in Ngarbuh and called for an urgent and transparent investigation so that the perpetrators can be held accountable.

Any allegations of intimidation of UN staff or humanitarian actors are deeply worrying. We call on all parties to provide unrestricted access to humanitarian actors who must be allowed to work freely and without intimidation. Through the UN Security Council, we have communicated the need for unimpeded access for humanitarian staff and human rights monitors. The UK urges the Government of Cameroon to engage with all international partners to bring peace to the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) region.

■ Diplomatic Service

Emily Thornberry: [\[19788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of international law to protect diplomatic staff posted overseas.

Wendy Morton:

We frequently assess the adequacy of international law to protect diplomats and other FCO employees posted overseas. We do so as part of our day to day business and in the context of specific provisions and cases as they arise.

■ Greece: Immigration

Dan Carden: [\[23493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the validity of reports of the Hellenic Coast Guard and border police using violent and dangerous methods to turn back refugees and migrants.

Wendy Morton:

We are concerned by the situation on the Greek border, and we remain in close contact with the Greek authorities. We continue to work across government to explore where the UK can further support Greece to improve the conditions for migrants. We do, of course, oppose any actions that endanger human life.

■ Guinea: Politics and Government

Catherine West: [\[23584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he has taken with the Government of Guinea to help ensure that the constitution, democracy and the rule of law in that country are upheld.

James Duddridge:

The British Government is concerned by the deteriorating political environment in Guinea and the demonstrations that have led to violence in recent months. On 27 February I issued a statement urging the Government of Guinea to ensure that the elections and referendum scheduled for 1 March were conducted in a transparent,

fair, timely and credible way. We encourage the Government of Guinea to take this into account, and call on all parties to support an inclusive process and to respect the rule of law when the rescheduled elections and referendum take place.

We continue to raise our concerns about civic and political issues with the Government of Guinea through our Ambassador in Conakry. The UK, alongside other international partners, has urged all parties to renew dialogue, avoid disproportionate use of force, and demonstrate calmness and restraint. We are following developments closely and stand ready to support Guinea in its efforts to become a more peaceful, stable and democratic country.

■ Gulf of Guinea: Abduction

Emily Thornberry:

[21178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the increase in kidnappings off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea.

James Duddridge:

The UK is aware of continuing reports of piracy attacks in the Gulf of Guinea. While the number of attacks remain within historic norms, we share the concern of the shipping industry about the increase in kidnappings for ransom. The UK's first priority in the region is to support British businesses and trade. The UK is engaged bilaterally, with allies, and through international structures to tackle maritime insecurity, through military capacity building, the provision of aid, and civil training. We also work closely with proactive partners in the shipping and petrochemicals industry to ensure that their voice is heard in the region.

■ Haiti: Peacekeeping Operations

Emily Thornberry:

[21183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the extent of alleged sexual exploitation and abuse carried out by UN peacekeeping forces while operating in Haiti.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is aware of the reports of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in Haiti and the UN has published associated data on its website <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-data-introduction>. The latest UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti was replaced by a special political mission in November.

The UK fully supports the UN Secretary-General's (UNSG) zero tolerance approach to tackling SEA. The Prime Minister is a member of the UNSG's Circle of Leadership on the prevention of, and response to, SEA in UN operations. The Circle of Leadership is made up of global leaders who actively support this agenda. The UK is a signatory of the UN's Voluntary Compact on SEA; a global commitment of UN Member States to eliminate SEA.

Over the past three years the UK has provided over \$3 million to support UN Secretary-General efforts to tackle SEA and improve accountability. This includes contributing £200,000 in 2019/20 to support the UNSG Victims' Rights Advocate, who works to ensure the rights of victims and their needs are at the forefront of the UN's fight against SEA and supporting the launch of a Victims' Rights Statement in 2020 to further these values.

■ Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[21869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the written statement of 26 February 2020, HCWS126, on Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, whether interested (a) groups and (b) individuals may make submissions to that review; what the (i) format, (ii) word limit and (iii) deadline for those submissions should be; and when that review will be completed.

James Cleverly:

The review will engage with a range of stakeholders here and abroad to ensure proper consultation and challenge. The Government will utilise expertise from both inside and outside government for the review, ensuring the UK's best minds are feeding into its conclusions and challenging traditional Whitehall assumptions and thinking as needed.

The consultation process will include a variety of methods both formal and informal including meetings, roundables, workshops and focus groups. The review will be closely aligned to the Comprehensive Spending Review and an announcement of the timings will be made in due course.

■ Iran: Detainees

Catherine West:

[\[23599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress he has made in securing the release of British residents detained in Iran.

James Cleverly:

The Government remains extremely concerned about the welfare of British-Iranian dual nationals detained in Iran. The Foreign Secretary raised his concerns about dual national detentions with Foreign Minister Zarif on 6 January, and the Prime Minister did so with President Rouhani on 9 January. The Former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised the issue with the Iranian Ambassador on 13 January.

We will continue to consider using all the diplomatic and legal tools available to us, and to lobby the Iranian Government at the most senior level.

■ Israel: Educational Exchanges

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[23467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the benefits to (a) the UK and (b) Israel of the Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership in each of the last eight years.

James Cleverly:

The Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange (BIRAX) is a flagship project of the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Council Israel. Since the launch of BIRAX in 2011, around £13 million has been invested in 26 research projects, focusing on regenerative medicine including cardiovascular and liver disease, Alzheimer's, Diabetes and Parkinson's. BIRAX-supported research has been published in 77 publications and presented in about 96 conferences around the world. With projects at the forefront of scientific innovation, BIRAX has now progressed to tackle the global challenge of ageing, a priority for both the UK and Israel.

■ Libya: Armed Conflict

Emily Thornberry:

[\[21184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his (a) Turkish counterpart and (b) the UN on reports that two thousand Syrian rebel fighters have been deployed to Libya as part of Turkey's intervention in the conflict in that region.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports of foreign fighters being transferred from Syria to Libya. The UK and Turkey were amongst the participants in the 19 January Berlin conference on Libya. The conclusions of the Berlin conference were endorsed in UN Security Council Resolution 2510. This demands all UN Member States not to intervene in the conflict, and fully to comply with the UN arms embargo, including by withdrawing of all armed mercenary personnel. We have made clear to all of the participants in the Berlin Conference that we expect them to live up to the commitments they made there, to respect international law, and to support the United Nations in facilitating a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned inclusive political process to bring an end to the conflict.

■ Liu Feiyue

Emily Thornberry:

[\[21925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the conviction in Hubei province of Liu Feiyue, of the human rights news website Minsheng Guancha, to a five-year jail term for inciting state subversion.

Nigel Adams:

We regularly raise our concerns about media freedom in China. On 2 March Lord (Tariq) Ahmad expressed his concern about the findings of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China's (FCCC) Annual Report. He also issued a statement raising his concerns about the sentencing of journalist Huang Qi in August 2019. The former Foreign Secretary expressed concern about Liu Feiyue's detention and the deteriorating situation for journalists in China in a statement at the time of his sentencing in January 2019.

■ **Nigeria: Economic Growth****Emily Thornberry:**[\[21177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the extent of economic development in the (a) Igbo populated regions of south-western Nigeria and (b) the former State of Biafra in Nigeria 50 years after the civil war in those regions.

James Duddridge:

The UK respects the territorial integrity of Nigeria; we supported the reconciliation work that followed the Nigerian civil war and continue to support efforts to work for a secure and prosperous Nigeria for all Nigerians. Nigeria does not publish detailed breakdowns of economic development or disaggregated economic data for individual states or for specific ethnic groups. We remain committed to supporting the Government of Nigeria's work towards economic reform, including diversification of the economy to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth for all.

■ **Public Health: Emergencies****Henry Smith:**[\[21238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve data sharing agreements between countries in the case of a global health emergency.

Nigel Adams:

Under the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005, the World Health Organization (WHO) implements a clear policy on data sharing in the context of public health emergencies that all countries are encouraged to comply with. The IHR encourage States to share information with WHO before a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) is declared. Data can be made publicly available if a PHEIC is declared, if there is evidence of international spread of infections or other harmful agents or if there is an immediate need for international control measures.

Since the Coronavirus outbreak began, the UK has engaged internationally with affected countries to raise the importance of providing the WHO promptly with comprehensive "line-list" demographic and geographic information. The British Government encourages all countries to comply with requirements of International Health Regulations, which includes sharing of data in case of public health

emergencies. Through Official Development Assistance, We are also supporting 6 Lower-Middle Income Countries to improve their compliance with International Health Regulations .

The UK also has other bilateral or multilateral relationships where we share information. These include the Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

■ **Rendition and Torture**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[18867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his US counterpart on the US Administration providing evidence to Police Scotland's investigation into the use of Scottish airports to facilitate torture and rendition.

James Cleverly:

As this is an ongoing Police Scotland investigation it would not be appropriate to comment.

■ **Thailand: Elephants**

Theresa Villiers: [\[23618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Thai counterpart on the treatment of elephants in shows and tourist attractions in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The Government takes reports of animal cruelty throughout the world seriously and we are committed to raising standards of animal welfare at home and abroad. We regard animal welfare to be the responsibility of each country and so would expect laws to be put in place by the respective country.

It is important that the British public are aware of issues around engagement with the elephant tourism industry. To that end, advice about elephant tourism and the risks that mistreatment can bring can be found in the regularly updated Travel Advice for Thailand, which is published on GOV.UK

The British Government has been at the forefront of driving global efforts to safeguard the world's most vulnerable species and we remain committed to protecting global wildlife for generations to come.

■ **Yemen: Military Intervention**

Alyn Smith: [\[23573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is taking steps to investigate attacks against Oxfam infrastructure and projects in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The Government is deeply concerned by attacks against Oxfam infrastructure and projects in Yemen. We urge all parties to the conflict to respect and act in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Whenever we receive reports of alleged violations of IHL, including any attacks against Oxfam, we routinely seek information from all credible sources, including from Non-Governmental Organisations and international organisations.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **5G: Health Hazards****Carla Lockhart:****[20023]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the health risks posed by 5G roll out.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) advises it is possible that there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves when 5G is added to an existing network or in a new area. However, the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to international exposure guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health.

Information about these guidelines and the evidence reviews supporting PHE's position are provided at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>

PHE is committed to monitoring the evidence applicable to 5G and other radio technologies, and to revising its advice, should that be necessary.

Sir Christopher Chope:**[21139]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on health of long-term exposure to wireless radiation from 5G technology; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 March 2020]: Public Health England (PHE) advises it is possible that there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves when 5G is added to an existing network or in a new area. However, the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to international guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health.

Information about these guidelines and the evidence reviews supporting PHE's position, including considerations of the evidence as to whether health effects from

exposure to radio waves might occur in the long term, can be viewed at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health/5g-technologies-radio-waves-and-health>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>

PHE is committed to monitoring the evidence applicable to 5G and other radio technologies, and to revising its advice, should that be necessary.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Mental Illness

Preet Kaur Gill:

[18707]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many attendances have been logged for people aged 18 years and under who attended A&E for (a) deliberate self-harm and (b) psychiatric conditions in England in each of the last three years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The requested data is provided in the attached table.

Over the next five years, spending for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than the overall spend on mental health, which will itself be growing faster than the overall National Health Service budget. The increased investment will improve community services, provide more crisis care and provide better support for people with mental health issues.

It should be noted that changes in figures over time need to be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage.

Attachments:

1. pq18707 [Table PQ18707 formatted.docx]

■ Antibiotics

Jim Shannon:

[19873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent overuse of antibiotics in the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

Optimising the use of antimicrobials is central to the United Kingdom's efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The UK's five-year national action plan for AMR sets the ambition to reduce UK antimicrobial use in humans by 15% by 2024.

NHS England and NHS Improvement is strengthening antimicrobial stewardship through initiatives including education, training, clinical support tools and guidance. In 2020/21, the National Health Service will use Commissioning for Quality and Innovation schemes to improve the management of urinary tract infections and reduce antimicrobial use in secondary care.

Public Health England's 'Keep Antibiotics Working' national public awareness campaign, first launched in October 2017, has helped reduce public expectation for antibiotics and supports healthcare professionals in their prescribing conversations with patients.

■ Atrial Fibrillation: Diagnosis

Jim Shannon:

[\[19959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the diagnosis of arterial fibrillation.

Jo Churchill:

In February 2019, Public Health England published national cardiovascular disease ambitions. This included an ambition which calls for improvements in the detection of atrial fibrillation (AF) from 79% to 85% by 2029. Further details of the ambitions can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ambitions-set-to-address-major-causes-of-cardiovascular-disease>

In England, over 15 million people are eligible for a NHS Health Check. A check includes standardised tests which are used to assess an individual's chance of having a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years. This includes, as part of a blood pressure test, taking a person's pulse rhythm to identify any irregularities and need for further diagnostic tests to determine if the person has AF.

■ Barts Health NHS Trust: Private Finance Initiative

Stephen Timms:

[\[22348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to relieve the private finance initiative obligations of Barts Healthcare NHS Trust; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 4 March 2020]: This Government is determined to tackle the worst excesses of previous private finance initiative (PFI) deals, and we are currently considering options on how best to take this forward.

As a minimum, we will be helping all National Health Service trusts with PFI contracts, including Barts, to ensure they are implementing high quality contract management to get the most out of their contracts. The Department's PFI Centre of Best Practice is assessing PFI contracts and supporting trusts in developing their contract management capabilities. This will help achieve better value for money and deliver efficiencies from existing PFI contracts.

■ Breast Cancer: Obesity**Jim Shannon:** [\[19957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has had recent discussions with health professionals on the connection between breast cancer and the need for weight loss; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

No recent discussions have been held.

■ Cancer: Children and Young People**Helen Hayes:** [\[23649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the availability of specialist cancer services for teenagers.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement is currently revising the Teenager and Young Adults Cancer Services specification, following on from a consultation which ran from 5 June until 4 August 2019. The consultation sought views on proposed changes to teenager and young adult's cancer services. We expect publication of the final documents no later than May 2020.

■ Cancer: Drugs**Jim Shannon:** [\[19953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that patients have (a) early and (b) timely access to cancer drugs.

Jo Churchill:

New arrangements for the assessment and adoption of new cancer drugs were introduced in 2016 to help improve patient access to new cancer drugs, including through the Government established Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) now appraises all new cancer drugs and aims to publish draft recommendations before a drug receives a licence. The CDF is now linked to the NICE appraisal programme and where there is too much uncertainty to be able to support routine funding, NICE is able to recommend the most promising new cancer drugs for use through the CDF, with funding available from the point of NICE's draft recommendation or licensing.

Previously NICE recommended cancer drugs were only routinely funded following publication of its final guidance.

■ Coronavirus**Lisa Nandy:** [\[23532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will (a) work cross-party with and (b) provide (i) advice and expertise and (ii) reports from discussions at COBRA meetings to all MPs in pursuit and support of decisions relating to coronavirus.

Jo Churchill:

Cross-party support is vital in relation to COVID-19. The Government continues to provide advice to hon. Members relating to COVID-19, including constituency related matters. COBRA meetings are emergency planning forums and the Government will continue to update parliamentarians as things progress, providing appropriate updates accordingly.

Bambos Charalambous:[\[23606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in the event of a pandemic what arrangements he is making for providing a medical cause of death so that the death can be registered.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has published an action plan, which includes the principle to ensure dignified treatment of all affected, including those who die.

In the event of the outbreak worsening, or a severe prolonged pandemic, the response will escalate, and the focus will move from Contain to Delay, through to Mitigate. During this phase the pressures on services and wider society may start to become significant.

The action plan recognises that there could well be an increase in deaths arising from the outbreak, particularly amongst vulnerable and elderly groups. The United Kingdom Government and devolved administrations will provide advice for local authorities on dealing with this challenge in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Costs**Seema Malhotra:**[\[20493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of Covid-19 to date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 March 2020]: The Department is following Government plans to contain, delay, research and mitigate against COVID-19. Whilst in the current 'contain' phase all costs are being managed within the National Health Service existing health funding allocations. The Department has made £40 million available to fund Covid-19 related research and speed up the development of a vaccine.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[20544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the funding required to respond effectively to an outbreak of Covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 March 2020]: The Department is following Government plans to contain, delay, research and mitigate against COVID-19. Whilst in the current

'contain' phase all costs are being managed within existing health funding allocations. The Department has made £40 million available to fund COVID-19 related research and speed up the development of a vaccine.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[20545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of cancelling NHS workers' leave to deal with a potential Covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 March 2020]: The Government published its action plan on 3 March.

As part of its phased response, the Government will ensure that the health and social care system is prepared to respond to all eventualities, at all phases of a potential future pandemic, the National Health Service, Health and Social Care Northern Ireland and local authorities have plans in place to ensure people receive the essential care and support services they need - and sometimes this might mean that other services are reduced temporarily. Plans are flexible to respond to different types of pandemics - ranging from a mild pandemic with a low impact on services, for example, the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, through to a severe prolonged pandemic as experienced in 1918 'Spanish Flu'.

Marion Fellows:

[\[22002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on efforts to prevent the spread of covid-19 of statutory sick pay provisions that may deter people that have to work from (a) self-isolating and (b) reporting symptoms.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 March 2020]: The nature and scale of the response depends on the course of the disease. As our understanding increases and the impact of the disease becomes clearer, we will issue further detailed advice about what to expect if and when further measures become necessary.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care advised in his Oral Statement on 26 February, columns 322-23, that self-isolation on medical advice is considered sickness for employment purposes and that it is a very important message for employers and those who can go home and self-isolate as if they were sick, because it is for medical reasons.

Individuals that develop any of the following symptoms, however mild: fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat and difficulty breathing should monitor their symptoms and call NHS 111 or their general practitioner.

■ Coronavirus: Hospital Beds**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[20388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many bed spaces are available for patients who have been diagnosed with Covid-19 in each region.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 March 2020]: This information is not available in the format requested.

Lisa Nandy: [\[23457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of the provision of intensive care beds in the event of a outbreak of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is confident that the United Kingdom is well prepared for disease outbreaks, having responded to a wide range of infectious disease outbreaks in the recent past, and having undertaken significant preparedness work for an influenza pandemic for well over one decade. NHS England have provided assurance that, at this point in time, they are confident they have enough bed capacity.

In preparing for, and responding to, a serious disease outbreak, the Government and the devolved administrations aim to ensure that the agencies responsible for tackling the outbreak are properly resourced to do so, that they have the people and the equipment and medicines they need.

■ Coronavirus: Italy**Mr Stephen Morgan:** [\[23553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor people returning to the UK from Italy for symptoms of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Airports providing flights between Italy and the United Kingdom have displayed posters and provided leaflets on symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if a traveller becomes unwell. These are available in nine different languages.

Public Health England has created a poster about the current risk of travelling to Italy. This has been sent to UK airports, seaports and international train terminals to inform passengers about affected areas in Italy. COVID-19 materials are available at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/4992>

PHE advice on COVID-19 is updated regularly and can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

■ Coronavirus: Northern Ireland

Colum Eastwood: [\[22062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to allocate additional support to the Northern Ireland Executive in the event of an outbreak of covid-19 outbreak in Northern Ireland.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 March 2020]: The Department is working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive across several areas, including supply chains and preparations for the National Health Service. We hold regular discussions with the devolved administrations, including between the Chief Medical Officers. The Department continues to develop plans in case the virus spreads further including in Northern Ireland, which have been published in our Action Plan.

■ Dental Health: Public Consultation

Sir George Howarth: [\[19760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the 2019 Prevention Green Paper, when his Department plans to publish the public consultation on supervised tooth brushing.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's Green Paper: 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s', published in July 2019, committed to consulting this year on a national school toothbrushing scheme in more pre-school settings and primary schools in England.

The intention is to begin a public consultation on a national school toothbrushing scheme, later this year.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[19913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 287932 on Hormone Replacement Therapy tabled on 19 September 2019 by the Hon. member for Birmingham Edgbaston; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

We are aware that the Evorel Transdermal Patch range has been unavailable from November 2019 due to a change in ownership of the product range from Janssen-Cilag to Theramex. The Department has been in regular contact with Theramex, who began reintroduction of Evorel Conti and Evorel 50 patches from mid- February 2020, with further supplies expected at the end of this month. The whole Evorel range is expected to be available by the end of March 2020.

Although the supply of Evorel patches has been affected, alternative hormone replacement therapy products continue to remain available. We regularly update the National Health Service on the supply situation and are continuing to engage with

organisations such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare and the British Menopausal Society.

■ Food: Advertising

Sir George Howarth: [\[19762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish its response to the public consultation entitled, Introducing further advertising restrictions on TV and online for products high in fat, sugar and salt, published in March 2019.

Jo Churchill:

We will be responding to the consultation 'Introducing further advertising restrictions on TV and online for products high in fat, sugar and salt' as soon as possible.

■ Health Services: EU Nationals

Neale Hanvey: [\[23401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence EU citizens will be required to provide of settled status in order to receive NHS treatment after the transition period.

Edward Argar:

European Economic Area and Swiss citizens do not require Home Office confirmation of settled or pre-settled status to access National Health Service care. Settled or pre-settled status is an immigration status related to the European Union Settlement Scheme. This scheme is about securing an individual's rights under the Withdrawal Agreement to reside in the United Kingdom beyond 31 December 2020.

Access to free NHS secondary care is unrelated to the EU Settlement Scheme and is entirely based on being 'ordinarily resident' in the UK. Being ordinarily resident means, broadly, living in the UK on a lawful and properly settled basis for the time being, with non-EEA nationals who are subject to immigration control also required to have an immigration status of 'indefinite leave to remain'. From 2021, the new global immigration system will apply the same requirements to migrants from the EEA and Switzerland.

Where a patient's ordinarily resident status is not known, it will be for the NHS organisation that provides the treatment to assess this, based on the evidence of lawful, settled residence the patient provides.

■ Health: Females

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[23591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to develop a women's health strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[23592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the development of a women's health strategy will take into account (a) the Government's development of a sexual and reproductive health strategy and (b) Public Health England's anticipated reproductive health action plan.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[23593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisations will be consulted in the development of his Department's women's health strategy; and how those organisations will be consulted.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[23594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timetable is for the (a) development and (b) publication of the Government's women's health strategy.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[23595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what topics will be included in the women's health strategy.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[23596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) the prevention of unplanned pregnancies and (b) abortion will be included in the women's health strategy.

Jo Churchill:

Plans to develop a women's health strategy are at an early stage. This Government is committed to engaging widely with organisations from across the health and care sector to inform our thinking on women's health.

We are mindful of good work that is already being developed and how this could inform such a strategy, including Public Health England's Women's Reproductive Health Action plan. It has also become apparent over the last few years that we can do better in terms of other services we provide for women, and we will consider potential improvements carefully.

Specific policy or subject areas for inclusion in a strategy have not yet been decided. There is benefit in providing an overarching framework within which a wide range of initiatives on women's health can fit.

There is as yet no fixed timetable for announcement or publication. Officials are working closely with Ministers to work through these details, and we will set out our plans in due course.

■ Hospitals

Rushanara Ali: [\[23413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of improving the process for hospitals who wish to become recognised as specialist NHS Trust hospitals.

Edward Argar:

Specialist hospitals are widely recognised for their excellence within individual specialties, including rare and complex cases. However, there is no formal specialist trust designation, and many National Health Service trusts provide both specialist and non-specialist services.

NHS England is responsible for the commissioning of prescribed specialised services. The specialised services directly commissioned by NHS England are listed in Schedule 4 to the National Health Service Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Groups (Responsibilities and Standing Rules) Regulations 2012.

Life Expectancy**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[22024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of (a) low paid and (b) insecure work on life expectancy.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 March 2020]: Health is good for work and work is good for health. We have taken a range of actions to help families keep more of what they earn including the recent announcement that on 1 April we will increase the National Living Wage for over 25s by 6.2% to £8.72. The Department for Work and Pensions is building a clearer picture of how people in low pay progress in work and what we can do to support them, so that everyone, at whatever life stage, can improve their employment outcomes.

Stephanie Peacock:[\[22025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of levels of child poverty on life expectancy.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 March 2020]: The circumstances we are born in to and the conditions in which we live all have a major bearing on our health and wellbeing. The Government is committed to a sustainable long-term solution to child poverty in all areas of the United Kingdom, including reforming the benefits system so that it supports employment and higher pay. The approach we are taking goes beyond focus on income alone, so that we address the root causes of poverty and improve long-term outcomes from families and children, with a focus on parental employment and children's educational attainment – the two areas that can make the biggest difference.

Lung Diseases**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[22424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to reduce the incidence of lung disease.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[22425]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of lung disease.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 March 2020]: Smoking is the biggest preventable risk factor for serious lung diseases in England.

While smoking rates in England continue to decline - as a result of a comprehensive programme of tobacco control at national and local levels - alerting the public to the serious risks of smoking and supporting smokers to quit are major priorities for Public Health England (PHE) and are at the centre of the Government's Tobacco Control Plan (TCP) for England. The TCP sets out the Government's vision to create a smokefree generation and can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-smoke-free-generation-tobacco-control-plan-for-england>

PHE also runs a programme of smokefree marketing activity, including Stoptober. Information on the harms smoking tobacco causes is available on the Smokefree website, the One You website and via the Smokefree National Helpline. The website can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

In September 2019, PHE published the Second Atlas of Variation in Risk Factors and Healthcare for Respiratory Diseases. This Atlas has 64 indicators examining trends and geographical variation in risk factors for example smoking, trends in numbers and rates for a range of lung diseases including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, pneumonia, tuberculosis and lung cancers. The Atlas also looks at geographical variation and time trends in emergency admissions to hospital, length of stay and treatments such as that for asthma.

The rate of emergency admissions to hospital for respiratory diseases has increased significantly from 2013/14 to 2018/19.

The number of new cases of lung cancer has increased from 2001-03 to 2015-17, in both men and women. However, after adjustment for the size of the population and its age, the incidence rate of lung cancer has steadily fallen in men but risen in women.

■ Malnutrition

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[19967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent malnutrition in (a) hospitals, (b) care homes and (c) primary care settings.

Jo Churchill:

Malnutrition is a common health problem, affecting all ages and all health and care settings.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence quality standard for nutrition support in adults (QS24) requires that all care services take responsibility for the identification of people at risk of malnutrition and provide nutrition support for everyone who needs it. An integrated approach to the provision of services is fundamental to the delivery of high-quality care to adults who need nutrition support.

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[19970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help support the prevention of malnutrition at the community level.

Jo Churchill:

Malnutrition (or under-nutrition), is both a cause and a consequence of ill health and government recognises the multiple complex issues associated with it.

Public Health England has published an evidence review which considers what works in supporting older people to maintain a healthy diet and reduce the risk of malnutrition in a community setting. The review can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-older-people-maintain-a-healthy-diet-a-review-of-what-works/helping-older-people-maintain-a-healthy-diet-a-review-of-what-works>

Government advice is that most people should follow a diet in line with the United Kingdom's national food model, the Eatwell Guide. Those who are underweight may need more energy or nutrient-dense foods and drinks. The Eatwell Guide is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2012 quality standard 'Nutrition support in adults' provides advice to help identify people who are either malnourished or at risk of malnutrition in hospital or in the community. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs24>

■ Malnutrition: Health Education

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[19969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness of malnutrition among (a) older people, (b) relatives of older people and (c) health and social care professionals.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[21272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness of malnutrition in the elderly amongst (a) older people, (b) their relatives and (c) health and care staff.

Jo Churchill:

Government advice is that most people should follow a diet in line with the United Kingdom's national food model, the Eatwell Guide. Those who are underweight may need more energy or nutrient-dense foods and drinks. The Eatwell Guide is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

The National Health Service website provides information to help raise awareness of the common signs of malnutrition and seeking treatment for individuals and carers. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition/>

Health Education England (HEE) have a number of e-learning sessions covering diet and nutrition across the life course that can be accessed via the e-Learning for Healthcare platform. The HEE population wellbeing portal offers free access to education, training and professional development resources, to help deliver improvements in public health and prevention. HEE are currently developing a healthier weight competency framework.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Fleur Anderson:****[23411]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve mental health services for children and young people.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24 sets out that an additional 345,000 children and young people in England will have access to support via National Health Service-funded mental health services and school-or college-based mental health support teams by 2023/24.

The first 59 mental health support teams are becoming operational and 123 teams will be in place by early 2021 with the programme rolling out to at least 20-25% of the country by 2023.

We are also piloting a new four-week waiting time for children and young people's mental health services in 12 areas and incentivising every school or college to identify and train a senior lead for mental health.

■ Mildmay International**Rushanara Ali:****[23414]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the cost-effectiveness of (a) maintaining the services provided by Mildmay Mission Hospital and (b) providing those services in NHS acute wards.

Rushanara Ali: [\[23415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the cost to the public purse of a bed at (a) Mildmay Mission Hospital and (b) an acute ward at an NHS hospital for one night.

Edward Argar:

The national tariff is a set of prices and rules used by providers of National Health Service care and commissioners to deliver the most efficient, cost effective care to patients.

The tariff for Mildmay Mission Hospital tariff is 50% higher than the acute provider tariff.

Admissions to Mildmay Mission Hospital are based on agreed clinical criteria and on the ability of the service to meet a patient's needs, and are not based on cost.

■ **NHS 111: Ambulance Services**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[23426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for a response to a 111 call in each of the last six months.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[23428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have used the 111 service in (a) Hampstead and Kilburn constituency and (b) London in each of the last six months.

Edward Argar:

This information is not available in the format requested.

■ **NHS 111: Coronavirus**

Mr Steve Baker: [\[23653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure 111 call handlers do not direct suspected covid-19 patients to urgent treatment centres; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Should an individual contacting NHS 111 meet the case definition they will be supported to report to the most appropriate testing facility, or alternatively home testing will be provided.

■ **Obesity**

Mary Glendon: [\[21988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if it is his Department's policy to support the aims of World Obesity Day 2020.

Mary Glendon: [21989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle weight stigma; and if he will make a statement.

Mary Glendon: [21990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his policies on tackling obesity.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 March 2020]: The Department supports the aims of world obesity day and is delivering a world-leading childhood obesity plan to reduce the prevalence of children who are obese. This has been recognised in Unicef's 'State of the World's Children' report, published in October 2019, as 'paving the way to ensure that all children grow up in a healthy food environment'. The Unicef report is available at the following link:

www.unicef.org/media/61356/file/SOWC-2019.pdf

We have launched a review into weight management services to understand how we can empower people living with obesity to achieve and maintain a healthier weight and we are working with NHS England to develop approaches to improve the quality of brief advice given by health and care professionals on weight management in general practice.

Through the three chapters of 'Childhood obesity: a plan for action' we are bringing forward a wide range of measures to reduce the prevalence of children who are obese. We have seen important successes including the average sugar content of drinks subject to the soft drinks industry levy decreasing by 28.8% between 2015 and 2018, and significant investment being made in schools to promote physical activity and healthy eating.

■ **Pregnancy: Alcoholic Drinks**

Jim Shannon: [19955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent guidance he has issued to pregnant women on the effect of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' Low Risk Drinking Guidelines published in August 2016 recommends that for women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, the safest approach is not to drink alcohol at all, to keep risks to a minimum. In March 2017, the Department issued guidance to industry setting out how the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines could best be communicated on the labels of alcoholic drinks. This included specific advice on the communication of warnings not to drink alcohol during pregnancy. In light of the Chief Medical Officers' guidance the National Health Service public facing website has updated their guidance and the Start4Life advice has also been updated. These can be viewed here at the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/alcohol-medicines-drugs-pregnant/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/alcohol/>

Public Health England and NHS England as well as local commissioners are already undertaking awareness and education on the prevention agenda on the dangers of drinking any alcohol while pregnant such as through the Maternity Transformation Programme. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has also updated its guidelines 'CG62 Antenatal care for uncomplicated pregnancies' to reflect the Chief Medical Officers' low risk guidelines that the safest approach is abstinence, and that where mothers are worried, they should seek advice from their midwife or general practitioner. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-consumption-advice-on-low-risk-drinking>

■ Prostate Cancer: Health Education and Research

Dr Luke Evans:

[20046]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase (a) research into and (b) awareness of prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

On 10 April 2018, the Government pledged £75 million towards clinical trials for prostate cancer which will focus on improving early diagnosis and survival rates as well as exploring options for different treatments for men affected by the disease.

In 2014, Public Health England ran a Be Clear on Cancer local pilot campaign focusing on 'Prostate Cancer' in London. This included posters (by the roadside and in barber shops), print, tailored public health messaging on local radio, street ambassadors and public relations. Further information on this campaign for prostate cancer can be viewed at the following link:

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/media/2457630/Be-Clear-on-Cancer-Web-Accessible-GP.pdf>

■ Shipping: Coronavirus

Darren Jones:

[19985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, if he will take steps to ensure that UK ports publish regularly updated health information on covid-19 from each docking ship's Maritime Declaration of Health.

Jo Churchill:

At the point at which a ship's declaration would be received, any report could only be treated as a suspected case, as laboratory testing takes place later in the care pathway. For this reason, the United Kingdom ports do not routinely publish this information on COVID-19.

■ Social Services: Finance

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[23432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee's seventh report of Session 2017-19, Social care funding: time to end a national scandal, published on 4 July 2019, HL Paper 392, if he will make it his policy to allocate an additional £8 billion of funding per year to adult social care.

Helen Whately:

Putting social care on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges we face as a society.

The Government is providing councils with access to an additional £1.5 billion for adults and children's social care in 2020/21. This includes an additional £1 billion of grant funding for adults and children's social care, and a proposed 2% precept that will enable councils to access a further £500 million for adult social care.

This £1.5 billion is on top of maintaining £2.5 billion of existing social care grants and will support local authorities to meet rising demand and continue to stabilise the social care system.

Future funding for social care will be set out at the next spending review.

■ Suicide: Males

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[23579\]](#)

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 his policy to include representatives from the LGBTQ+ 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.

HOME OFFICE

■ Abortion

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[12207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent research her Department has undertaken into victims of sexual abuse and exploitation being forced to undergo abortions; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

Neither the Home Office nor the Department of Health and Social Care have commissioned research into coerced or forced abortions. All abortion providers must comply with legal requirements and have regard to any statutory guidance relating to safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All providers must have policies and protocols in place for dealing with these groups. Health professionals are required to be competent in child protection and are expected to participate in regular training to update their skills. All clinical staff working in abortion services should be trained to at least level 3 of the intercollegiate framework, Safeguarding Children and Young people: roles and competences for health care staff. Providers should have protocols in place for obtaining informed consent abortion including identifying women and girls who may feel coerced or endangered and enable them to raise their concerns in confidence.

■ **Asylum: Applications****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[9719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many fresh asylum applications were submitted in 2019 by individuals who had previously been refused asylum in the UK.

Thangam Debbonaire:[\[9720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the five most common nationalities of asylum applicants making fresh claims to the UK were in 2019; and how many fresh asylum applications those nationalities submitted.

Chris Philp:

Home Office records indicate that a total of 6,273 further submissions were lodged on protection grounds between 01/01/2019 and 30/09/2019, by individuals who had previously been refused asylum in the UK.

Home Office records indicate that the five most common nationalities of asylum applicants lodging further submissions on protection grounds between 01/01/2019 and 30/09/2019, and the volume of applications submitted by these nationalities, are:

NATIONALITY	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	985
Pakistan	704
Iraq	680
Bangladesh	510
Afghanistan	433
Total	3,312

When people who have previously been refused asylum in the UK wish to make representations in support of a fresh asylum applications these are recorded as Further Submissions. Only where those submissions have been considered and it has been decided not to grant any leave is it considered whether the Further Submissions amount to a fresh asylum application.

The above data relates to main applicants who lodged Further Submissions between 01/01/2019 and 30/09/2019 which is the latest reportable period in line with immigration statistics. The data is a count of the number of Further Submissions lodged. Some people may have lodged more than one submission during the period.

■ **Asylum: Disclosure of Information**

Alex Norris: [\[7254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on sharing information on people seeking asylum in the UK with Government officials of their home countries.

Chris Philp:

In line with our legal and international obligations, we do not share information on people seeking asylum in the UK with the Government officials of their home country or seek information in a way that could expose them, or any family who remain in that country, to serious risk.

■ **Asylum: Interviews**

Tim Farron: [\[12230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many substantive asylum interviews were conducted (a) in total and (b) by video conference in 2019.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office are unable to provide the number of substantive asylum interviews that were conducted in total and by video conference in 2019, as this information is not held in a reportable format and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

■ **British Nationality: Children**

Stuart C McDonald: [\[23402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's policy paper entitled Home Office immigration and nationality fees published on 20 February 2020, what recent assessment she has made of compliance of the fee for registering a child as a British citizen with the ruling in *PRCBC and others v SSHD* [2019] EWHC 3536 (Admin).

Kevin Foster:

Although the judge ruled that there had not been proper consideration of the Government's section 55 duties, the Immigration and Nationality Fees Regulations 2018 were not found to be unlawful.

We therefore continue to charge Child Registration fees as set out in the Fees Regulations. The court case remains on-going; the Home Office notes the Court's judgment from the Admin Court and is considering its implications carefully, while awaiting the appeal hearing.

■ Deportation: Jamaica

Stuart C McDonald: [\[9708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will suspend charter flights to Jamaica pending the publication of the Windrush lessons learned review.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[9711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to resume charter flights for the involuntary repatriation of people to Jamaica.

Chris Philp:

The planned Home Office charter flight to Jamaica is specifically for removing foreign national offenders with deportation orders in place. The Government, as obliged by law, has continued to remove foreign national offenders to Jamaica, some on charters and some on scheduled flights. It is incorrect to make a connection between these cases and Windrush.

Many of those have been convicted of very serious crimes – rape, attempted murder, sexual activity with a child and GBH.

■ Domestic Abuse

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[12325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the findings of the report entitled A Call to Action for a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy, published in January 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

Tackling domestic abuse continues to be a key priority for this Government..

The Domestic Abuse Bill, which we intend to bring forward as soon as practicable, includes provision for new domestic abuse protection orders, placing restrictions and other requirements on perpetrators in order to better protect victims. Such requirements may include engagement with a perpetrator behavioural change programme, an alcohol or substance misuse programme or mental health treatment.

We welcome the work of the expert organisations involved in developing 'A Call to Action for a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy'. We are currently considering this

as part of our ongoing work to understand what more we can do to tackle perpetrators and their harmful actions.

■ Domestic Violence Protection Orders

Helen Hayes:

[\[12396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure equity of access to domestic abuse protection orders.

Victoria Atkins:

Tackling domestic abuse continues to be a key priority for this Government. We will bring forward the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill, designed both to better protect victims and tackle perpetrators, as soon as practicable in the first session of this new Parliament.

The domestic abuse protection orders (DAPOs) created by the legislation will be available to all victims of domestic abuse. Victims will be able to apply for the order themselves, free of charge, and police or (with the leave of the court) a third party, such as a specialist domestic organisation, will also be able to make an application. Criminal, family and (in specified circumstances) civil courts will also be able to make orders on the court's own volition during the course of existing proceedings.

We have purposefully designed the order to provide victims and practitioners with a clear, accessible route to protection. We will issue statutory guidance to support each application route.

■ Drugs: Developing Countries

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding the Government has allocated to support operational anti-narcotic services in developing countries.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many countries are receiving official development assistance to support counter-narcotic operations.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure (a) transparency and (b) accountability on the provision of official development assistance to support counter-narcotics projects overseas.

James Brokenshire:

The UK government works overseas to tackle drugs supply to the UK alongside other serious and organised crime (SOC) threats in line with the direction and ambition set out in the SOC Strategy 2018.

Overseas counter-narcotics activities are part of wider funded activities (both Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA) designed to tackle the underlying

drivers, enablers and consequences associated with serious and organised crime in developing countries as well as tackling penetration across borders.

The Home Office is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in all its aid projects, in line with the UK Aid Strategy. Significant progress has been made to that effect, with the 2020 UK Aid Transparency Review listing the Home Office as one of just three departments to have been publishing good quality results data, but we recognise there is more to be done. We will continue to work closely with DfID and other HMG departments on best practices to improve UK aid and its impact.

■ Female Genital Mutilation

Jim Shannon:

[\[12263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to tackle female genital mutilation.

Victoria Atkins:

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a crime and it is child abuse. We will not tolerate a practice that can cause extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls. The Government significantly strengthened the law in 2015 to improve protection for victims and those at risk, and to break down the barriers to prosecution.

The Home Office's FGM unit delivers nationwide outreach on FGM, speaking at awareness-raising events across the UK. We continue to provide free resources for frontline professionals, including: a resource pack, e-learning, statutory multi-agency guidance and a range of communication materials.

Between October 2018 and February 2019, the Home Office ran a communications campaign to tackle FGM, called 'Let's Protect Our Girls'. The campaign sought to prevent FGM by changing attitudes among affected communities and by raising awareness of the negative long-term health consequences of FGM. The campaign also made clear that FGM is a crime and encouraged communities to report via the NSPCC's FGM helpline.

Last year, the Home Office trained around 1,300 professionals across the country on how to apply for FGM and Forced Marriage Protection Orders. The events raised awareness of the scope and effectiveness of the orders, with the aim of encouraging professionals to always consider them in any safeguarding plans.

Operation Limelight, a joint operation between Border Force and the police, continues to raise awareness of FGM and forced marriage at the border in order to safeguard potential victims.

■ Gambia: Offences against Children

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[12449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the reports of 31 October 2019 by the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of

children on the abuse by tourists of children in The Gambia, what steps the Government is taking to (a) identify and (b) prosecute British tourists that have committed that offence.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse wherever and however it occurs. There can be no safe space for paedophiles to operate either here or abroad and we will do all we can to keep children safe. We continue to work closely with law enforcement in the UK and international partners to stop sex offenders from travelling abroad to prey on children, close down online networks and bring offenders to justice. We announced in the 2019 Spending Round an investment of an £30 million to support UK law enforcement to bear down on child sexual exploitation and abuse.

We are also funding projects overseas to build capacity internationally against this heinous crime through Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) overseas development aid. We have sponsored a project to reduce the vulnerability of high-risk destination countries from the threat posed by UK transnational child sex offenders (TCSOs) through targeted, sustainable capacity-building in support of National Crime Agency (NCA) operational activity. The project is in its second year and will deploy a team from the NCA internationally in direct local support of international law enforcement agencies working to combat high-risk child sexual abuse and exploitation. This includes a training and mentoring programme that builds sustainable capacity locally to safeguard children and prosecute offenders in collaboration with UK and international law enforcement agencies.

In 2012, the law was strengthened to ensure that all registered sex offenders must notify the police of any foreign travel. Police are able to assess the risk an offender may pose while abroad and engage with international law enforcement or apply to the courts for a civil order to restrict foreign travel. Breach of the requirements or a civil order is a criminal offence punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. The Government has carried out a review of the use of civil orders for transnational offenders and will draw on the findings and recommendations from the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse' recent 'Children Outside the UK' report to ensure the police have the tools and powers they need to target offenders and protect children from sexual abuse.

■ **Human Trafficking**

Steve McCabe:

[\[12203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the service standard is for the National Referral Mechanism to make a conclusive grounds decision following a reasonable grounds decisions for victims of human trafficking.

Victoria Atkins:

Following a positive reasonable grounds decision, and the minimum recovery and reflection period, the Single Competent Authority makes the conclusive grounds decision as soon as possible and only once there is sufficient information to do so.

■ Immigration Controls: Equality

Stella Creasy: [23555]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18815 on Immigration Controls: Equality, if she will place in the Library a copy of the analysis of the equalities impacts of the points-based immigration system in line with the public sector equality duties that her Department referenced in that Answer.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office continues to keep the policy equality statement under review in line with its public sector equality duty.

■ Immigration: Married People

Stuart C McDonald: [23548]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) women and (b) men prevented from sponsoring a non-EEA partner to join them in the UK as a result of insufficient earnings to meet the Minimum Income Requirement in the Immigration Rules, in 2019.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not collate or publish the information requested.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the outcomes of entry clearance visa applications at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets>.

Stuart C McDonald: [23560]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what equalities assessment her Department has undertaken on the effect of the minimum income threshold on rates of successful application for a spouse or partner visa.

Kevin Foster:

In February 2017, the Supreme Court upheld the lawfulness of the minimum income requirement, which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration, declaring that the policy is neither a breach of the right to respect for private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights nor discriminatory.

The Immigration Rules are kept under continuous review, including the minimum income requirement, and adjusted where necessary in light of feedback, impact and the findings of the courts.

■ Offences against Children

Jim Shannon: [12262]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to tackle child sexual abuse.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK Government is committed to stamping out all forms of child sexual abuse and doing all that we can to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

We have made a significant investment to improve our capabilities to tackle CSA offending, improve our safeguarding response and expanded our support for victims and survivors. We have also invested in identifying innovative approaches to tackling vulnerability among children and young people at risk of exploitation and piloted innovative multi-agency support for those who have experienced sexual abuse.

The step change in our response is already drawing this hidden crime out of the shadows. In September 2019, we announced we will invest an additional £30 million to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation and abuse and in early 2020 we will publish a first of its kind national strategy outlining our whole system response to tackling all forms of child sexual abuse.

Refugees**Tim Farron:**[\[12231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to continue beyond 2020-21 her Department's plan to resettle 5,000–6,000 refugees in that year.

Chris Philp:

On 17 June 2019, the former Home Secretary reaffirmed the UK's commitment to refugee resettlement by announcing a new, global scheme, which will begin in 2020 and aims to resettle in the region of 5,000 refugees in its first year of operation. It is right that we continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for the most vulnerable refugees, for whom resettlement is the only durable solution. Detailed plans for resettlement in future years have not yet been confirmed.

Refugees: Families**Helen Hayes:**[\[12397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to expand refugee family reunion routes.

Chris Philp:

The Government already provides a safe and legal route to bring refugee families together through its family reunion policy. This allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country.

Refugees can also sponsor adult dependent relatives living overseas to join them where, due to age, illness or disability, that person requires long-term personal care that can only be provided by relatives in the UK. There are separate provisions in the Rules to allow extended family to sponsor children to come here where there are serious and compelling circumstances.

Further, there is discretion to grant visas outside the Immigration Rules, which caters for extended family members in exceptional circumstances – including young adult sons or daughters who are dependent on family here and living in dangerous situations.

Amending the policy without careful thought could significantly increase the numbers who could qualify to come here, not just from conflict regions but any country from which someone is granted protection. This would mean extended family being able to come here who themselves do not need protection – which risks reducing our capacity to assist the most vulnerable refugees.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Parliamentary Estate: Hygiene

Michael Fabricant:

[\[24236\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether hand sanitisers can be installed on portable stands throughout the Parliamentary Estate.

Pete Wishart:

In-House Services did try to purchase these through their supplier; however due to the current high demand for sanitisers and sanitiser units there was a 3–4 week delivery time. They have therefore purchased the units without stands and requested that the Parliamentary Maintenance Services Team (PMST) provide suitable stands.

In-House Services are currently awaiting delivery of the dispensers, and PMST are in the process of making the stands.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Building Regulations: Fires

Steve Reed:

[\[23425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 18683, on Building Regulations: Fires, what the Government's timetable is for responding to the technical review of Approved Document B of the building regulations.

Christopher Pincher:

Following the call for evidence and the summary of responses published in December 2018, we will be responding shortly to the subsequent consultation on sprinklers, signage and evacuation alert systems. We will also announce the next steps for other fire safety measures that were raised in the call for evidence on the technical review of Approved Document B.

■ Buildings: Fire Prevention**Steve Reed:** [\[23450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is his Department's policy to support a mandatory competent person scheme for the installation of fire-resistant glazing.

Christopher Pincher:

Competent persons schemes are voluntary under the building regulations 2010, and we expect that the installation of fire resistant glazing would be covered by the existing scheme for general glazing. More generally, the issue for increasing competence across industry is being addressed through the work of the industry led Competence Steering Group to deliver the reforms recommended by Dame Judith Hackitt.

■ Community Housing Fund**Scott Mann:** [\[21363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Community Housing fund.

Christopher Pincher:

Ministers and Officials from the Department have regular discussions with counterparts in HM Treasury on a range of issues, including on housing related matters.

Scott Mann: [\[21365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has for the Community Housing fund after March 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

The Community Housing Fund is currently scheduled to close in March 2020. Ministers are considering all budgets in the round and allocations for 2020/21 will be confirmed at Main Estimates in the Spring. Allocations for future years will be considered at the forthcoming Budget and Spending Review. The support and close involvement of the local community enables the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through speculative development.

John Healey: [\[21886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much of the Community Housing fund has been allocated.

Christopher Pincher:

The Community Housing Fund was launched in 2016. Over the four years that the Fund has been in existence, a total of £118,385,132 has been allocated to date by Homes England, or directly by MHCLG and its predecessor, the Department for

Communities and Local Government. Allocations made by Homes England may differ from actual expenditure.

■ **Community Housing Fund: Blackpool**

Paul Maynard: [\[21222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether Homes England received an application to the Community Housing Fund from Blackpool Council prior to the bidding for that fund closing.

Christopher Pincher:

An application from Blackpool Council to the Community Housing Fund was received by Homes England prior to the bid round closure in December. The bid was approved and an allocation of £285,000 was confirmed to the council in October 2019.

■ **Disabled Facilities Grants: Blackpool**

Paul Maynard: [\[21217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations were delivered in the Blackpool local authority area in each year since 2010.

Luke Hall:

The Government does not currently produce data on the Disabled Facilities Grant. However, the Department provides local authority returns to Foundations, the Government-funded national body for home improvement agencies. Foundations analyse the data to understand Disabled Facilities Grant delivery nationally. From records provided by Foundations, the data shows the following totals for adaptations that were delivered by Blackpool local authority since 2010:

Number of Disabled Facilities Grants delivered by Blackpool local authority since 2010:

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
560	173	213	242	214	130	152	179	267	264

Source: Foundations, the national body for home improvement agencies

■ **High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention**

Steve Reed: [\[23449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has a policy on the use of fire-resistant glazing in high rise residential blocks.

Steve Reed: [\[23451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is his Department's policy that all high-risk buildings should contain fire safety corridors equipped with fire-resistant material.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government does not specify which materials or approaches to construction should be used to meet the requirements of the building regulations, as a prescriptive approach would limit the ability for innovation. Developers and designers should use the guidance in Approved Document B to decide whether fire resistant glazing or fire resistant material in corridors could be used to meet the requirements of the regulations in the construction of buildings.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Steve Reed: [\[23438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost to (a) local authorities and (b) housing associations of carrying out the data collection exercise on residential buildings 18 metres and over in height to identify their external wall systems.

Christopher Pincher:

In September 2019 the Department announced the provision of £4 million new burdens funding to support local authorities with the External Wall Systems data collection. This funding allows local authorities to collect data on their own social stock, and on the private residential stock, hotels and student accommodation in their areas.

No estimate has been made of the cost to housing associations to provide data on their own social residential properties.

Catherine West: [\[23544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will ensure that (a) apartment buildings receive a fire risk assessment that follows post-Grenfell guidance on building safety, (b) exterior material on apartments is tested thoroughly regardless of landlord willingness to pay and (c) affected residents are offered prompt and fair (i) compensation and (ii) assistance in the event that they are unable to sell their property.

Christopher Pincher:

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 makes it clear that building owners must undertake fire risk assessments on their buildings. Government has made ACM screening tests available, at no cost, to all building owners. However, it remains building owners' responsibility to ensure that all dangerous cladding systems are identified and remediated in line with the guidance contained in the Consolidated Advice published by the Government on 20 January. Costs should not be a barrier to

remediation, and Government is reviewing options on how best to support building owners and leaseholders.

■ Homelessness: Young People

Siobhan Baillie:

[\[15119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to tackle homelessness among people aged under 25.

Luke Hall:

This Government is committed to tackling homelessness, especially amongst vulnerable young people.

We have implemented the Homelessness Reduction Act, the most ambitious reform of homelessness legislation in decades. It has greatly expanded the duties on local housing authorities, meaning many young people, who may not previously have been eligible for support, are now being helped. The new duties should help prevent homelessness before it occurs. The Act also places a duty on public bodies, including Children's Services, ensuring better partnership working between public bodies and local authorities.

As part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy, the government committed £3.2 million per annum to increase the support provided to care leavers at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. The funding has been allocated to the 47 local authorities with the highest number of care leavers with complex needs.

We fund St Basil's to deliver positive pathway events with local authority housing teams to share best practice on supporting young homeless people and ensure they are putting prevention and early help at the heart of their service.

We have put in place bespoke support for local authorities through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisers.

Finally, we have updated guidance on the 'Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation' setting out the respective duties of children's services and housing services.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[21280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will include in the Planning White Paper (a) provisions to ensure that new developments are consistent with net zero carbon objectives and (b) all other recommendations made by the Royal Town Planning Institute for inclusion in that White Paper.

Christopher Pincher:

The White Paper will aim to make the planning system clearer, more accessible and more certain for all users, including home owners and small businesses. This will

include addressing the resourcing and performance of local planning departments. At this stage, however, we are unable to comment on the precise contents of the White Paper.

■ Housing: Construction

Alex Sobel: [\[22049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 13580 on Local Government: Carbon Emissions, what steps his Department is taking to help the two per cent of local authorities not taking action to reduce emissions from their areas to do so.

Luke Hall:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 14 February 2020 to Question UIN 13580.

Tom Tugendhat: [\[23550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance is given to local planning authorities on assessing the effect of aviation noise on proposed developments through (a) Local Plan allocations and (b) individual planning applications.

Christopher Pincher:

National planning policy and guidance include strong protections against noise effects, making it clear that the planning system should prevent new and existing development from being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of pollution. Plan-making and decision making need to take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur when development may create additional noise, or would be sensitive to the prevailing acoustic environment (including any anticipated changes to that environment from activities that are permitted but not yet commenced). Planning guidance is clear that this can include noise pollution from aircraft, where this could subject residents or occupiers to significant noise impacts.

■ Housing: Parking

Elliot Colburn: [\[23526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities plan adequately for residential vehicle parking for new-build properties.

Mr Simon Clarke:

It is for local authorities to assess the level of parking required for new developments and to set local parking standards. The Government has made clear in the National Planning Policy Framework the factors that authorities should take into account when setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development. These include considering the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; the availability of and opportunities for public transport; local car

ownership levels; and the need to ensure an adequate provision for spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

■ **Local Government: Carbon Emissions**

Alex Sobel: [\[22048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 13580 on Local Government: Carbon Emissions, which local authorities are not taking action to reduce emissions from their areas.

Luke Hall:

My Department is engaging with councils and the Local Government Association, as well as other departments in Westminster, to determine what action is being taken across the local government sector in response to the climate challenge, and what support would be appropriate to ensure that the least active councils level up their endeavours, and that best practice from the most active councils is disseminated across the sector.

■ **Local Housing Allowance**

Bridget Phillipson: [\[23434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of Local Housing Rates on the availability of private sector rented accommodation to homeless people.

Luke Hall:

We know that there are varied and complex reasons behind a person's homelessness, including the availability of private rented sector accommodation, which this Government is taking steps to address.

Following the 4 year freeze to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates this Government is now delivering on the manifesto commitment to end the benefit freeze. From April 2020 LHA rates will be uprated by CPI – an increase of 1.7 per cent in line with wider benefit uprating.

In addition, since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in Discretionary Housing Payment funding, enabling local authorities to protect the most vulnerable claimants and supporting households to adapt to housing support reforms.

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.

The increase will mean the majority of people in receipt of housing support in the Private Rented Sector will see their housing support increase on average by around £10 per month.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Flags

Philip Davies:

[\[21200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

Philip Davies:

[\[21943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

Luke Hall:

The Department's London headquarters is a shared building, which MHCLG jointly occupies with the Home Office and DEFRA. The Home Office manage the property and are responsible for the flying of flags on the property.

The table below sets out the number of number of occasions each flag has been flown in the appropriate years;

	UNION FLAG	(B) ST GEORGE'S	(C) SALTIRE	(D) FLAG OF WALES			
2015	Every day 24/7	St George's day	1	St Andrew's day	1	St David's day	1
2016	Every day 24/7	St George's day	1	St Andrew's day	1	St David's day	1
2017	Every day 24/7	St George's day	1	St Andrew's day	1	St David's day	1
2018	Every day 24/7	St George's day FIFA world cup	2	St Andrew's day	1	St David's day	1
2019	Every day 24/7	St George's day Women's FIFA world cup Rugby WC semi-	4	St Andrew's day Women's FIFA world cup	2	St David's day Rugby WC semi- final	2

	UNION FLAG	(B) ST GEORGE'S	(C) SALTIRE	(D) FLAG OF WALES
		final Rugby WC final		
2020	Every day 24/7	0	0	0

■ Parking: Fees and Charges

Mr Toby Perkins:

[21230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the (a) lowest and (b) average car parking price in council owned car parks in town centres was in 2018-19 in each local authority area.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[21233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many fee-paying car parks in each local authority in England are owned by (a) local authorities and (b) private companies.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Department does not collect this information. However, as part of our work to implement the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019 and support local authority provision of off-street parking, we are working closely with both local government and private parking stakeholders to gather data and information to inform policy-making in this area.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[21231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the total surplus earned through car parking charges was by each local authority in 2018-19; and what proportion of the total annual income that surplus was for each of those local authorities.

Mr Simon Clarke:

In November 2019, the Department published final outturn data of local authority revenue expenditure and financing for the financial year April 2018 to March 2019. This includes data of income from on-street and off-street parking, including sales, fees and charges. It can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/846282/RO2_2018-19_data_by_LA.xlsx

■ Planning Permission

Mr Toby Perkins:

[21232]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding each local authority in England has (a) allocated to planning services and (b) raised in planning fees and charges in 2018-19.

Christopher Pincher:

My Department collects data from local authorities on the total amount of expenditure for development control and building control combined. Expenditure for 2018-19 was reported as approximately £828 million, with funding raised by sales, fees and charges in 2018-19 as approximately £528 million. These figures are set out in the MHCLG local government revenue outturn table RO5 which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2018-to-2019-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

Scott Mann:

[22007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of placing a limit on the number of times a planning application can be submitted for the same site.

Christopher Pincher:

Local planning authorities already have powers to decline to determine applications if they have previously refused permission for two or more substantially similar applications on the same site, or if a substantially similar application has been rejected by the Secretary of State on appeal or following call-in, within the past two years.

■ Sleeping Rough

Paul Maynard:

[21218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the methodology used for counting rough sleepers; and when guidance was last issued to local authorities on that methodology.

Luke Hall:

MHCLG published the latest official rough sleeping snapshot statistics on 27 February 2020. For more information see link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>

These Official Statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and practices of the UK Statistics Authority's *Code of Practice for Statistics* and provide information about the estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night between 1 October and 31 November 2019 and some basic demographic details (i.e. age, gender, nationality). MHCLG is confident these statistics provide an accurate way of

estimating the number of people sleeping rough across England on a single night and an indication of trends over time.

The snapshot figures are collected by outreach workers, local charities and community groups and are independently verified by Homeless Link. Every local authority is required to consult with at least one type of local agency to produce their snapshot figures. In 2019, 72 per cent of local authorities reported they had consulted with 5 different groups or more. Local authorities must involve volunteers who are independent of the council and its outreach team (e.g. non-commissioned services). Homeless Link will not verify the process if no local agencies, or only those that are part of, or commissioned by, the local authority are involved.

The latest guidance to local authorities on the official rough sleeping snapshot was published before the annual snapshot process began last year in August 2019 and is available here: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/counts-and-estimates-evaluating-extent-of-rough-sleeping>

Alongside the publication of the 2019 annual rough sleeping statistics this week, MHCLG also published a technical report which outlines in detail how the statistics are collected, the quality assurance processes in place, recent improvements and the limitations so users are fully informed about the overall quality of the Rough sleeping snapshot statistics. For more information see link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019-technical-report>

■ Towns Fund

James Wild:

[R] [23600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the capital budget was for each lead local authority in the 100 areas selected to apply for the Towns Fund in the financial year 2019-20.

Mr Simon Clarke:

100 places were selected to develop proposals for Town Deals as part of the Towns Fund. In December 2019, local authorities received a share of £16.4 million revenue capacity funding to support the development of a Town Deal Board and Investment Plan for each of the selected towns in their area, up to a maximum of £173,029 per town. To date, no capital funding has been allocated.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Armed Conflict: Children

Patrick Grady:

[23582]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to end violence against children in conflict and humanitarian crises.

James Cleverly:

DFID is providing significant support to protect children from violence around the world in conflict and humanitarian crises. Our programmes assist children and reduce their risks of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

In August 2019 at the G7 Summit, the UK Prime Minister announced £90 million of new UK support for education in emergencies and crises across the world, this will support 600,000 children living in conflict areas and areas of proacted crises. Girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school in emergencies. This investment is a key plank of the PM's plan to ensure more girls benefit from 12 years of education. This funding will provide safe spaces for girls and psycho-social support to those who have experienced violence and trauma.

The UK's £16 million per year contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund is strengthening access to justice for children in Haiti; reintegrating children associated with armed groups in Myanmar; and preventing the recruitment of child soldiers in Somalia.

DFID's 'Children on the Move' programme is working in Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan to develop and strengthen child protection systems for migrating, internally displaced, and refugee children. This is helping to prevent and respond to violence against some of the world's most vulnerable children.

■ Crimes of Violence: Children**Patrick Grady:**[\[23623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to prevent violence against children when UK aid is being distributed.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is reducing violence through dedicated investments to protect children, alongside interventions embedded in wider development and humanitarian programming. This includes our £10 million funding to the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, which drives international ambition and progress through campaigns such as 'Safe to Learn', that aim to inspire action to end violence in schools. We have also provided £10 million in funding to UNICEF to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children on the move in Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan through a strengthened child protection system.

We have recently introduced a stronger approach to safeguarding children throughout the department's programming and will seek to effect change across the development sector.

■ Department for International Development: Flags**Philip Davies:**[\[21192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags her Department owns.

Wendy Morton:

DFID has two headquarter buildings in the UK; one at 22 Whitehall and the other at Abercrombie house in East Kilbride.

DFID own and fly flags in accordance with DCMS policy. The total number of flags owned across both buildings are:

- (a) 9 x Union Jacks
- (b) 2 x St George
- (c) 4 x Scottish Saltire
- (d) DFID does not own any Welsh flags.

Philip Davies:[\[21935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of her Department in London in each year since 2015.

Wendy Morton:

DFID flies flags in accordance with DCMS policy.

In the London office the Union Jack is flown every day that another flag is not flown. The Scottish Saltire is flown every day from the DFID office in East Kilbride, Scotland.

Since 2015, the other flags were flown from the London office as follows:

DATE	ST. GEORGE	SCOTTISH SALTIRE	WALES FLAG
2015	1	0	0
2016	1	0	0
2017	1	1	0
2018	5	0	0
2019	1	0	0

■ Marriage: Children

Patrick Grady:[\[23646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to end child marriage worldwide.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains resolute in our commitment to end child marriage, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The UK's Strategic Vision on Gender Equality is clear on this.

Through our flagship investments, DFID committed a total of £39 million over 5 years (2015-2020) to support international efforts to end child marriage, in twelve high prevalence countries across the world. Since 2015 the programme has reached over 7.7 million girls with schooling initiatives, skills training and girls' clubs to prevent and respond to child marriage. Engagement with community and faith leaders has also shifted attitudes and practices related to girls' rights, in programme areas reaching 4.2 million people.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Human Rights

Alyn Smith:

[\[23574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that UK-exported weapons are not used in attacks that breach international (a) humanitarian and (b) human rights law.

Greg Hands:

Weapons exported from the UK require an export licence. All export licence applications are considered on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (known as the Consolidated Criteria), based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available, including reports from NGOs and our overseas network. The Consolidated Criteria provides a thorough risk assessment framework and requires us to assess the impact of providing equipment and its capabilities.

Licensing decisions take into account international humanitarian and human rights law. We will not issue any export licences where we assess there is a clear risk that the goods might be used for internal repression or in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[22386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department's Export Control Joint Unit is making on re-evaluating of extant export licences in relation to the export of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia.

Greg Hands:

Work to develop a revised assessment process enabling the Secretary of State for International Trade to re-take the licensing decisions remitted to her by the Court of Appeal's judgment of 20 June 2019, has advanced steadily and significantly since the judgment. An announcement will be made once the Secretary of State is in a position to re-take these decisions.

Harriett Baldwin: [\[23416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when the appeal to the Supreme Court in respect of the process for issuing arms export licences to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners will take place.

Greg Hands:

The listing of the hearing is a matter for the Supreme Court and it would not be appropriate to comment until the Court has published the hearing dates.

■ **Coronavirus: Trade Fairs**

Barry Gardiner: [\[19738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effect of covid-19 on UK business representation at overseas trade shows.

Graham Stuart:

We advise UK businesses to follow FCO travel advice in determining whether to attend overseas trade shows. We are maintaining a log of all cancelled and postponed events which the Department for International Trade was due either to participate in or support companies to attend, such as the 'MIPIM' Global Property Event, via for example the Tradeshow Access Programme. We recognise the impact that continued uncertainty will have on UK business and supply chains and will seek to minimise this using our UK and globally based staff and partners.

■ **Financial Services: British Nationals Abroad**

Catherine West: [\[23442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of British nationals working in financial services in Hong Kong.

Graham Stuart:

We have not made any estimate of the number of British national currently working in financial services in Hong Kong.

■ **Stock Market: China**

Catherine West: [\[23443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many British companies use the Hong Kong-Shanghai Stock Connect to invest in mainland China.

Graham Stuart:

We do not hold information on the number of British companies using the Hong Kong-Shanghai Stock Connect.

JUSTICE**■ Alternatives to Prosecution: Shoplifting****Dr Matthew Offord:****[21248]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people convicted of retail theft have been dealt with via an out-of-court disposal in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on out of court disposals including Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) and cautions by offence up to December 2018. This information can be found using the Out of Court Disposals data tool.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802305/out-of-court-disposal-tool-2018.xlsx

In the PND pivot replace 'Outcome' with 'Offence' in the 'Rows' field. Put 'Outcomes' in the 'Filters' field and filter by 'DA12 Theft (retail under £100)'. The total number of PNDs issued for Theft (retail under £100) will then be displayed in row 21.

In the Cautions pivot, filter by 'Offence' to include only '46 Theft from Shops'. The total number of cautions issued for these offences in each year will then be displayed in row 21.

Separately, the Home Office has published information on outcomes for police recorded crimes, including community resolutions. These are counted on a 'per offence' basis (rather than per defendant as the case with the MoJ data on cautions and PNDs above). The number of community resolutions for shoplifting can be found in the outcomes open data tables, available at the landing page here:

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

with the latest tables (for the first two quarters of 2019/20) available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/859287/prc-outcomes-open-data-aprsep2019-tables.ods

In the offence subgroup tab select 'Shoplifting'

Remove 'sum of force outcomes for offences recorded in quarter'

Drag 'Force outcomes recorded in quarter' to the values field and ensure it says 'Sum of' (rather than count of) – if not, click the pull down, value field settings and change to sum.

Add financial year and financial quarter to the columns field and sum across relevant quarters of community resolutions displayed in the table. Previous financial years are published on the landing page above.

	2014*		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Rape	129	43	112	105	118	127	111	131	70	60	60	41
<i>Robbery with firearm</i>	8	0	11	2	8	0	15	0	12	1	10	0
Under 13 sexual offences including rape	20	7	22	12	16	9	15	17	15	8	13	2
Total	391	90	310	238	350	274	425	315	338	224	329	215

Notes for Table 1:

1. *CRCs were created as part of Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) in June 2014. Therefore, data provided for NPS for 2014 include cases managed by former Probation Trusts prior to TR.
2. The NPS and CRCs are required to complete automatic reviews on any eligible offender who has been charged with (including attempted or conspiracy to commit offences): murder manslaughter, other specified offences causing death, rape or assault by penetration, or a sexual offence against a child under 13 years of age.
3. Conditional reviews are completed when an offender has been assessed as high risk of harm during the current sentence (NPS only) or where no risk assessment has been completed.
4. The data represents SFO charges and not a unique count of offenders.
5. Not all notifications result in the completion of a review as charges are reduced or dropped. Not every offender charged with a SFO is convicted.
6. Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Similarly, the number of SFO reviews completed is not equivalent to the number of SFO convictions in any year.

The Honourable Member may be referring to the Freedom of Information Act response 200121016 on 11 February 2020. However, that response did *not* show the number of people murdered by offenders under supervision. Rather, it showed the number of SFO reviews completed in each calendar year for 2014 to 2019, where the offender had been *charged with* murder.

Table 2 shows the total number of SFO reviews completed in 2014 as a whole, the number of reviews completed for those who were charged with murder, and the number of subsequent convictions for murder. Tables 3 and 4 below show the number of offenders being supervised by the NPS and CRC respectively who were charged with murder, where a review was completed in the years 2015, 2016, 2017,

and the offender subsequently *convicted of murder*. We have provided the number of SFO reviews in 2014 as a separate table (Table 2), as Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) created CRCs mid-year and prior to this, Probation Trusts managed the cases.

Table 2

YEAR	ALL REVIEWS(A)	REVIEWS INVOLVING A CHARGE OF MURDER(B)	REVIEWS IN (B) THAT RESULTED IN A MURDER CONVICTION(C)
2014	404	71	49

Table 3

YEAR	ALL NPS REVIEWS(A)	NPS REVIEWS INVOLVING A CHARGE OF MURDER(B)	REVIEWS IN (B) THAT RESULTED IN A MURDER CONVICTION(C)
2015	291	28	15
2016	281	24	20
2017	362	47	28

Table 4

YEAR	ALL CRC REVIEWS(A)	CRC REVIEWS INVOLVING A CHARGE OF MURDER(B)	REVIEWS IN (B) THAT RESULTED IN A MURDER CONVICTION(C)
2015	202	42	24
2016	235	47	26
2017	273	65	39

Notes for Tables 2, 3,4

1. Conviction data are as at 27 January 2020
2. Not all SFO notifications result in the completion of a review as charges can be reduced or dropped. Not every offender charged with a SFO is convicted.
3. The data represent SFO reviews conducted following charge and not a unique count of offenders.
4. We have not included the three month data relating to 1 January-31 March 2018.

5. Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

In October, the Ministry of Justice will publish annual reconviction data, including murder for 2018/19, with an accompanying narrative which also explains the correct interpretation of the figures. The current publication can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843382/Serious_Further_Offences_-_Bulletin.pdf

Tables 2, 3 and 4 provide the number of reviews completed in respect of offenders supervised by the NPS or CRCs who were charged with and subsequently convicted of murder between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2017. We have not provided data specific to individual CRCs as the total figure in some cases amounts to five people or fewer. We consider that we would be in breach of our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and / or the Data Protection Act 2018 if we release information that would risk identification of the individuals concerned.

■ Ministry of Justice: Flags

Philip Davies: [21201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

Chris Philp:

The information requested in relation to the Ministry of Justice and its agencies is not held centrally.

The department's Headquarters at 102 Petty France holds two Union Jack flags, one flag of St. George, two Scottish Saltires, and one Flag of Wales.

Philip Davies: [21944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Prison Sentences

Bridget Phillipson: [23437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) psychological and (b) financial support available to the families of prisoners serving IPP sentences.

Lucy Frazer:

Families and significant relationships can play an important role in supporting both men and women in custody and on release and reducing reoffending.

Prisons commission a range of family support services based on the needs of their local populations and their families and significant others.

HMPPS fund the Prisoner's Families Helpline to provide information, advice and guidance to the families of all prisoners irrespective of sentence or offence type. This may include signposting to other services available from public and voluntary sector organisations.

In addition specific guidance is being developed by HMPPS for the families and significant others of IPP prisoners that will help them to understand some of the key processes involved in progression, and how they can help.

The Help with Prison Visits Scheme (formerly known as Assisted Prison Visits Scheme) operated by HMPPS Family Services can help provide financial assistance for close relative, partners or sole visitor to visit people in prison. Support is based on the eligibility of the applicant not the sentence or offence type of the person they are visiting.

Family initiatives and schemes are routinely monitored and reviewed.

■ Prisoners: Gender Recognition

Catherine West:

[22016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many trans prisoners are detained in prisons which do not match their gender assigned at birth; how many trans prisoners have requested a complex cases board review; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the safety of trans prisoners.

Lucy Frazer:

We do not collect data on the birth gender of transgender individuals. As part of the Offender Equalities Report 2018/19, there were 163 people who self-identified as transgender. Transgender prisoners were defined as those individuals known within prison to be currently living in, or are presenting in, a gender different to their sex assigned at birth and who have had a case conference (as defined by PSI 17/2016 The Care and Management of Transgender Offenders). Further information can be found at the following link;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848759/hmpps-offender-equalities-2018-19.pdf

Of those, 6 declared their legal gender opposite to the gender of the estate they were located. (Legal gender is most often the same as birth gender. However, where a transgender individual has a Gender Recognition Certificate, the legal gender will be different to the gender assigned at birth).

Between the dates of January 2019 to January 2020, 22 transgender individuals have had one or more Complex Case Boards. These individuals have met at least one of the eight criteria qualifying for a case board, which are outlined in the Policy Framework. The view of the individual is always sought as part of the case board process.

The safety of all prisoners is our priority and we are committed to ensuring that those under our care and management are treated fairly, lawfully and decently, with their rights properly respected. In 2019 the Ministry of Justice conducted a review into the care and management of individuals who are transgender and this led to the publication of a revised Policy Framework which strengthens the risk and safeguarding process. This was fully implemented on 31st October 2019 across all men's and women's prisons. The safety of all prisoners is of paramount concern. All known risks, both towards or presented by a transgender person in prison, will always be taken into account. Individuals can be cared for and managed in the gender with which they identify, regardless of their location in a male or female prison.

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services: Subsidies

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: **[23398]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of each journey on subsidised bus transport.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Net government support per passenger journey for local bus travel in England outside London was 60.1 pence in 2018-19. This includes 19.6 pence per journey of net public transport support, 5.7 pence per journey of Bus Service Operators Grant, and 22.7 pence per journey of concessionary travel spend. Concessionary travel spend is not a subsidy as bus operators are reimbursed for carrying concessionary passengers on a "no better off, no worse off" basis.

More information can be found in the bus0503 statistics table which can be found online with the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus05-subsidies-and-concessions>

■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Theresa Villiers: **[23616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been allocated to the Mayor of London for reducing emissions from buses in each of the last 10 years.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has provided the following amounts to Transport for London (TfL) to help reduce emissions from buses over the last 10 years:

YEAR	SCHEME NAME	AMOUNT (£)
2019	Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme	£6,956,000
2017-19	Clean Bus Technology	£3,000,000

YEAR	SCHEME NAME	AMOUNT (£)
	Extension Fund	
2017-19	Clean Bus Technology Fund	£3,000,000
2016	Low Emission Bus Scheme	£6,407,000
2015	Clean Bus Technology Fund	£500,000
2014	Clean Vehicle Technology Fund	£500,000
2009-12	Green Bus Fund	£22,999,740
TOTAL		£43,362,740

■ Buses: Hydrogen

Alex Sobel:

[\[22047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 13578 on Buses: Hydrogen, how much of the Department's £150 million investment was put towards hydrogen buses.

Rachel Maclean:

The department has allocated over £8 million to funding hydrogen buses and infrastructure as part of the Low Emission Bus Scheme and the Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme. Funding was allocated based on the quality of the bids received, with the same funding approach being taken irrespective of the technology chosen.

■ Department for Transport: Flags

Philip Davies:

[\[21191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport owns 5 Union Jack flags. The Department does not own any of the other flags mentioned.

Philip Davies:

[\[21934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Union Jack has been flown every day since 2015 at the Department for Transport's London headquarters building. The Department does not own any of the other flags mentioned.

■ Driving Tests

Alex Sobel: [\[18894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to introduce mandatory driving tests for US personnel coming to work on US bases before being permitted to drive on UK roads.

Kelly Tolhurst:

US Department of Defense (DoD) military and civilian personnel stationed at US military bases in the UK, and who are subject to the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, are permitted to drive on their domestic licenses. However, the US DoD requires its military and civilian personnel, and their dependents, to pass a DVLA written driving test before permitting their staff to drive in the UK. US diplomatic staff, to whom the NATO Status of Forces Agreement does not apply, can apply to the DVLA for a Diplomatic Driving Permit without taking any further tests but, in the interim, may drive in the UK on their domestic licenses for a period of up to one year.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[23644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of electric vehicle charging points in England; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of that number.

Rachel Maclean:

As of 1 January 2020, there were 109,314 domestic charging devices in England, funded through Office of Low Emission Vehicles grant schemes. The total number of domestic chargepoints will be higher than this, as not all electric car owners claim the grant. There were a further 13,719 public charging devices, according to the electric vehicle charging platform Zap-Map. The majority of public charging devices are funded privately and the Government does not hold a complete record of these installations, so the true number may be higher.

We recognise that range anxiety is often cited as one of the key barriers to motorists switching to electric cars, and we will continue to work with industry to establish one of the best electric vehicle infrastructure networks in the world. In collaboration with industry, the Government will invest £1 billion in charging infrastructure, ensuring that everyone is within 30 miles of a rapid charging station for electric vehicles.

In autumn last year, the Government launched the Chargepoint Infrastructure Investment Fund, a £400 million fund with up to £200 million from Government and £200 million from the private sector. The first £70 million of the Fund will create 3,000 new rapid chargepoints, more than doubling the number of rapid chargepoints across the UK by 2024.

Highways England has a commitment of £15m to ensure there are chargepoints (rapid where possible) every 20 miles on 95% of the Strategic Road Network by April 2020.

On 21 January, we announced that the Government has doubled the value of the On-street Residential Charging Scheme for 2020-2021 to £10 million to support the provision of up to 3,600 chargepoints for those that don't have off-street parking.

■ Highways England: Pay

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[21998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of pay increases for each level of staff employed in Highways England in the last ten years.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Highways England was established on 1 April 2015. The Department for Transport has not carried out an assessment of the adequacy of pay increases for each level of staff in Highways England over the period since its establishment.

Responsibility for setting pay levels within Highways England sits with the Company, overseen by its Remuneration Committee. Annual pay increases within Highways England are based on a number of factors, including affordability and guidance from the Department for Transport and the Cabinet Office.

I would like to assure you that the Secretary of State is placing significant focus on pay in the Department's arm's length bodies.

■ Maidstone Railway Line: Railway Stations

Damian Green: [\[23464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has received from Maidstone Borough Council on establishing a new rail halt between Charing and Lenham in Kent; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has not received any representations from Maidstone Borough Council about a new rail halt between Charing and Lenham in Kent.

■ Transport: Exhaust Emissions

Theresa Villiers: [\[23614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been allocated to the Mayor of London for reducing emissions from transport in each of the last 10 years.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has provided the following amounts to help reduce emissions from transport in London since 2011:

SCHEME	AMOUNT
Funding for 338 Low-carbon buses (this figure is for the Green Bus Fund from 2009-2012)	£23m

SCHEME	AMOUNT
Funding for 54 Low-emission buses	£6.4m
Funding for Ultra-Low Emission taxis	£25m
ULEV Taxi Infrastructure scheme	£5.2m
Go-Ultra Low Cities Scheme	£13.1m
Air Quality Grant (pre-2019)	£2m
Support to increase ULEV uptake	£10m
Clean Bus Technology Fund	£6.5m
Clean Vehicle Technology Fund	£0.5m
Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme 2019	£7.0m
Air Quality Grant 2019	£0.77m
Hydrogen for Transport Programme	£0.5m
Plug-in Car Grant paid out in respect of vehicles registered in London (current available figure)	£45m
Plug-in Taxi Grant paid for taxis licenced in London (payment made to vehicle manufacturers)	£13.52m
TOTAL	£158.39m

TfL also received £5.7bn over the period 2016 to 2021 for general transport funding, which included funding to cover the implementation of measures to address air quality.

TREASURY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Tim Loughton:

[\[901126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with his Swiss counterpart on equivalence between UK and Swiss financial markets and products after the transition period.

John Glen:

The UK and Switzerland have a strong and established relationship on financial services, with a large volume of cross-border financial services trade.

To ensure continuity in our relationship, the government has converted all equivalence decisions that the European Union currently has with Switzerland (with the exception of Central Clearing Counterparties equivalence), into UK domestic law. This means that they will continue to apply when the transition period ends.

The ability for HM Treasury to make equivalence decisions becomes active from the end of the Transition Period. After this time, HM Treasury will be able to grant equivalence to non-EEA jurisdictions. The UK is committed to maintaining an outcomes-based model of equivalence which recognises that a combination of different rules and supervisory practices may be used to achieve the same levels of resilient, market integrity, consumer protection, and financial stability.

■ Advertising: Internet

Bim Afolami:

[\[22029\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority's powers to stop the promotion of unregulated investment schemes and scams in online advertising.

John Glen:

The Treasury has given the FCA strong powers to ensure that products are regulated and promoted effectively. In May last year, following the collapse of London Capital and Finance, I launched a review of the regulatory regime for the issuance of non-transferable debt securities – often known as mini-bonds. This review has also encompassed the way that these products are marketed to consumers through the financial promotions regime. The Government will be announcing the results of this review shortly.

The Government takes fraud very seriously and continues to work closely with industry to close down the vulnerabilities that fraudsters exploit and ensure members of the public have the information they need to spot a scam and stand up to fraudsters.

I recognise that issuers of fraudulent online financial promotions have no regard for the regulatory protections we have in place. I have therefore asked my officials to work with the FCA as a priority to consider how best to respond to fraudulent financial services activity online.

■ Economic Cooperation: India

Gareth Thomas:

[\[21137\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings there have been of the UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue since 2005; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[21138\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings there have been between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Indian Finance Minister in each year since 2005; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Chancellor and the Indian Finance Minister meet on a regular basis, both bilaterally and multilaterally. One of the main forums for engagement is the UK-India Economic and Financial Dialogue, of which there have been nine since January 2007. In addition, the Chancellor and Indian Finance Minister attend many international meetings together, such as the G20, which allow for further engagement.

The UK and India have a strong economic and financial relationship, with UK and Indian investments supporting over half a million jobs across both economies. We continue to value our engagement with India and look forward to developing it further.

■ **Entrepreneurs' Relief**

Fleur Anderson:[\[23410\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is his policy to maintain the Entrepreneurs Relief scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's manifesto set out its intention to review and reform Entrepreneurs' Relief. The Government is committed to a tax system that supports investment and growth and keeps all taxes and reliefs under review to ensure they continue to meet these objectives. Any changes to the tax system, including any reform of Entrepreneurs' Relief, will be set out in the Budget on 11 March.

■ **Entrepreneurs' Relief: Ilford North**

Wes Streeting:[\[23488\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people in Ilford North constituency who claimed entrepreneurs relief in each year since 2015.

Jesse Norman:

The number of taxpayers claiming Entrepreneurs' Relief in the Ilford North constituency are given in the table below by tax year from 2015-2016 to 2017-18.

YEAR	NUMBER OF TAXPAYERS
2015-16	64
2016-17	35
2017-18	55

Statistics on Capital Gains Tax for 2018-19 are currently due for publication in August.

■ Foreign Companies: China

Catherine West: [\[23447\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Chinese companies had initial public offerings on the London Stock Exchange in 2019.

John Glen:

Analysis undertaken by the London Stock Exchange Group shows that two Chinese companies undertook an initial public offering in London in 2019.

■ Housing: Energy

Sarah Olney: [\[23422\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funding he plans to make available for improving insulation and energy efficiency in domestic buildings.

Steve Barclay:

Improving energy efficiency in homes has an important role to play in reducing fuel poverty and tackling climate change.

The Government will continue to support home energy efficiency to 2028, at least at the level of funding of the current Energy Company Obligation scheme. This will drive more than £6 billion of investment in energy efficiency upgrades in homes.

A Future Homes Standard, introduced by 2025, will require new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency.

The Government will announce plans for spending on economic infrastructure, including decarbonisation, in due course.

■ Loneliness

Ellie Reeves: [\[21346\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the nine Departments tasked with tackling loneliness receive adequate funding to (a) deliver the Government's long-term vision on tackling loneliness and (b) build on the progress made against the 60 commitments set out in the 2018 strategy entitled A Connected Society.

Steve Barclay:

The government is taking a cross-departmental approach to tackling loneliness, recognising that no one department holds all the levers for successful change. The work is led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with eight other departments contributing commitments to the Loneliness Strategy. The government's Loneliness Strategy was published in October 2018 and an annual report was published in January 2020, setting out headlines on progress so far. The government will carry out a Comprehensive Spending Review later this year, where the government will take a systematic view across all spending over multiple years and set future budgets. An announcement on the timing of the Spending Review will be made in due course.

■ Mortgages

Jim Shannon: [21267]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has held discussions with representatives from the UK Mortgage Prisoners campaign group.

Jim Shannon: [21268]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of the banking sector on interest rates for UK mortgage prisoners.

John Glen:

I met with members of the UK Mortgage Prisoners action group on 29 January 2020 to discuss the experiences of mortgage prisoners in the UK, and the action the Government and the FCA have taken to remove the regulatory barriers that previously prevented switching and Government support for borrowers in problem debt.

Decisions concerning the pricing of loans, including the level of interest charged, remain commercial decisions for lenders, and the Government does not seek to intervene in these decisions.

■ Overseas Companies: Hong Kong

Catherine West: [23445]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many British companies had initial public offerings on the Hong Kong stock exchange in 2019.

John Glen:

Analysis undertaken by the London Stock Exchange Group shows that no British companies undertook an initial public offering in Hong Kong in 2019.

■ Pensions: Tax Allowances

Jonathan Reynolds: [21984]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the estimated annual cost of providing tax relief to beneficiaries on pension pots inherited before the recipient is 75.

John Glen:

Since April 2015, individuals were able to pass on their unused defined contribution pension savings up to their Lifetime Allowance to any nominated beneficiary when they die, instead of paying the 55 per cent Income Tax charge which applied to most cases prior to that date.

The Exchequer cost of this change was set out at Autumn Statement 2014. In particular, information has been published on page 46 of the 'Autumn Statement 2014 policy costings' document, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/384071/AS2014_policy_costings_final.pdf

■ Public Sector Debt: Gifts and Endowments

Paul Maynard:

[\[21210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many payments have been made to the donations and bequests account in respect of the national debt in each financial year since 2009-10; and what the value of those payments was in each of those years.

John Glen:

Details of the donations and bequests received for each financial year since 2009-10 are reflected in the table below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF DONATIONS/BEQUESTS	AMOUNT OF DONATIONS/BEQUESTS (£)
2009-10	6	168,041
2010-11	11	54,709
2011-12	12	21,110
2012-13	12	406,556
2013-14	16	799,390
2014-15	13	7,823
2015-16	15	14,558
2016-17	15	180,393
2017-18	5	762
2018-19	15	11,069

This information has been publicly available since 2014-15 in a combined annual report for the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt (CRND) receipts and payments accounts which is available on the DMO website and can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.dmo.gov.uk/publications/annual-reports-and-accounts/>

■ Social Security Benefits: Lone Parents

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[23551\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the cost to the public purse of a parent in a single-parent household leaving paid employment and accessing benefits to look after their children, in each year since 2010.

Steve Barclay:

It is not possible to make an assessment with the information available. Assessing the total cost to the Exchequer is highly dependent on the individual's circumstances.

If a parent in a single-parent household left paid employment and accessed benefits to look after their children, under Universal Credit their total claim would be dependent on the claimant's age, where they live and their housing tenure type, how many children are in the household and whether they or any of their children have a disability. Depending on the level of previous earnings, it may be the case that the person would also be eligible to Universal Credit whilst they were in work.

The overall public spending impact will also include lost Exchequer revenues from any taxation paid (such as National Insurance and Income Tax) which is again is dependent on the level of previous earnings, and other circumstances determining their National Insurance category.

■ Treasury: Flags

Philip Davies: [\[21196\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

John Glen:

HM Treasury owns two Union Flags, one St George's flag, and one Scottish Saltire.

Philip Davies: [\[21939\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

John Glen:

HM Treasury flies the Union Flag daily at 1 Horse Guards Road. Any national flags are flown as and when required.

The Scottish Saltire and flag of Wales have not been flown at 1 Horse Guards Road.

The St George's flag has been flown twice in 2018 and on five occasions in 2019. It has not yet been flown in 2020.

■ Whisky: USA

Ian Murray: [\[23505\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken since 18 October 2019 to help the Scotch Whisky industry tackle the effect of US tariffs on single malt Scotch Whisky and liqueurs.

Jesse Norman:

The Treasury is discussing with other departments the Government's next steps on the Airbus dispute that has led to tariffs being imposed on a range of UK products. The Government is working closely with the EU and US to support a negotiated settlement as soon as possible, as the best way to resolve this dispute.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Candidates: Disability**

Caroline Lucas: [\[21954\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 18 February 2019 to Question 220173, on Candidates: Disability, whether it is still her Department's policy that political parties are responsible for supporting their disabled candidates; and what support is available to support independent deaf and disabled candidates.

Caroline Lucas: [\[21956\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Answer of 18 February 2019 to Question 220173 on Candidates: Disability, what progress has been made on the programme of work to help political parties to put long-term sustainable solutions in place; and if she will make a statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

The EnAble Fund for Elected Office was designed as an interim measure to allow political parties time to put in place support. Political parties were fully informed that the fund was for a limited period, and strongly encouraged to put support for their candidates in place.

While financial support for candidates in elections is a matter for political parties, the Government is also considering what support it might provide to succeed the current EnAble fund. The Disability Unit is considering options in connection with the National Strategy for Disabled People, which is due to be published in 2020.

■ EnAble Fund for Elected Office

Caroline Lucas: [\[21957\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has to extend access to the EnAble Fund beyond 31 March 2020 to provide financial support to deaf and disabled election candidates for disability-related costs in (a) the London Mayoral and London Assembly Elections on 7 May 2020 and (b) other forthcoming elections.

Elizabeth Truss:

The interim £250,000 EnAble Fund for Elected Office was set up to cover scheduled elections between December 2018 and March 2020. Officials are exploring how the Fund might support May 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner and Local election candidates after the Fund ends on 31st March 2020. The Fund is not available for the London Mayoral or the London Assembly elections.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Independent Serious Case Panel**

Paul Maynard: [\[21219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the minutes of each meeting of the Independent Serious Case Panel.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are absolutely committed to improving our services, especially to the most vulnerable, which is why we have set up the Serious Case Panel. The panel was developed to take themes and systemic issues that come out of various case reviews and make recommendations for improvements.

More information about the Serious Case Panel will be published in due course.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Stephen Timms: [\[23566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has carried out an equality impact assessment on its decision to uplift local housing allowance by 1.7 per cent.

Will Quince:

The Secretary of State has considered the impact on her decision to uplift Local Housing Allowance rates by 1.7% on persons with protected characteristics.

Helen Hayes: [\[23639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of local housing allowance rates.

Will Quince:

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is designed to ensure a fair balance between public spending and supporting vulnerable people to meet their housing costs. LHA rates are not intended to meet all rents in all areas.

Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in Discretionary Housing Payment funding, enabling local authorities to protect the most vulnerable claimants and supporting households to adapt to housing support reforms.

From April 2020 LHA rates will be increased by CPI. For people in particular circumstances who may require more support, Discretionary Housing Payments are available.

In addition, 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.

Helen Hayes:

[\[23647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the adequacy of local housing allowance rates.

Will Quince:

The Secretary of State meets regularly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Ministerial colleagues on a range of issues.

In January we were pleased to announce an end to the Local Housing Allowance freeze from April 2020 when Local Housing Allowance rates will be uprated by CPI – an increase of 1.7%.

This will mean around 900,000 people in receipt of housing support in the Private Rented Sector will see their housing support increase on average by around £10 per month.

■ **Means-tested Benefits: Coronavirus**

Mark Tami:

[\[23556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether people self-isolating due to possible covid-19 infection will be exempted from conditionality requirements for means-tested benefits.

Mims Davies:

Claimants who are self-isolating as a result of Covid-19 will have their mandatory work search and work availability requirements removed to account for a period of sickness.

Other work-related requirements outside of this will be tailored to take into consideration the claimant's capability and circumstances and can be conducted over the phone or through digital formats, making them realistic and achievable.

The decision to apply a sanction will continue to be considered on a case by case basis. However, conditionality requirements will be relaxed to ensure we do not punish those who take reasonable steps to protect themselves and others, including self-isolation, in the event of Covid-19 outbreak.

■ **Office for Disability Issues: Staff**

Paul Maynard:

[\[21216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time equivalent staff worked in the Office for Disability Issues on 1 June 2019.

Mims Davies:

There were 15.5 full-time equivalent staff working in the Office for Disability Issues on 1 June 2019.

■ Personal Independence Payment: North West**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[23546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants with mental health conditions have been required to undertake a face-to-face interview when claiming for personal independence payment in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey in the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not available.

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[23547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independence payment claimants were passed on to her Department's specialist team for severe hidden disabilities in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey in each of the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

We have a duty to provide a compassionate service to all of our customers, treating each person with dignity and respect to deliver the best service with the right outcomes. Therefore, we do not have a team specialising in hidden disabilities we ensure all members of staff are trained in dealing with all customers.

Our Case Managers have all had up-skilling sessions delivered around Holistic Decision Making to ensure they are equipped to action the most complex cases. Holistic decision making empowers Case Managers to review all available evidence and give customers the best opportunity to provide information. This allows us to better understand our customers and their conditions before making decisions.

We have a team of Vulnerable Claimant Champions to ensure our most vulnerable customers are supported when engaging with us. A vulnerable claimant is defined as someone who has difficulty in dealing with procedural demands at the time when they need to access our services; all staff are aware of the Champions and use them when they feel additional help is needed.

To ensure consistency, we provide our Case Managers with regular updates and provide sufficient time to read any policy guidance and complete mandatory training for Disability awareness. In addition, regular all colleague calls with medical experts specialising in various conditions are held along with monthly Quality Calibration sessions on real life cases. Quality Assurance Managers who are also always on hand to provide further expert help, advice and support to all of our people.

■ Poverty: Children**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[18800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children lived in (a) poverty and (b) extreme poverty in (i) Wales and (ii) Aberavon constituency in each of the last 10 years.

Will Quince:

National Statistics on the number of children in low income households are published annually in the "Households Below Average Income" publication.

Statistics for the number of children in low income households are not available at combined Local Authority level in this publication because the survey sample sizes are too small to support the production of robust estimates at this geography.

Statistics for the North West region can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>, "children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2017-18-tables" in tables 4.17ts (for relative low income, before and after housing costs) and 4.23ts (for absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

■ Social Security Benefits**Stephen Timms:****[22350]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what improvements have been identified in the Internal Process Reviews undertaken in the last 12 months.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 4 March 2020]: The Department is committed to improving the way it learns lessons from customers' experiences.

We are improving our internal guidance and communication to all staff and we are strengthening how we analyse reports and recommendations to identify systemic themes and issues so that effective improvements can be put in place.

And, a centralised team has been established to coordinate improvement activity, including monitoring where issues have occurred and the implementation of improvements.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus**Mark Tami:****[23674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has made to ensure that potential staff shortages due to covid-19 do not delay processing of benefits applications; and if she will make it her policy to backdate benefits for any claimants whose application is delayed due to staff shortages.

Mims Davies:

DWP has contingency plans in place that prioritise activities to protect payments to claimants and access to new claims when capacity is compromised.

The 'date of claim' will not be affected by capacity inside the Department.

■ Social Security Benefits: Suicide**Jim McMahon:****[23541]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 20593 on Social Security Benefits: Suicide, how many deaths by suicide her Department has investigated in each year since 2010.

Justin Tomlinson:

The National Audit Office recently published their briefing note on information held by the DWP on deaths by suicide of benefit claimants. This report can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/information-held-by-the-department-for-work-pensions-on-deaths-by-suicide-of-benefit-claimants/>

■ Universal Credit: Housing**Dan Jarvis:****[23627]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the amount payable in housing benefit and the housing element of universal credit decreasing when a non-dependent's earnings increase, what recent representations he has received on reducing the bracket for non-dependents' earnings.

Will Quince:

There are no income bands and only one deduction rate applied to Universal Credit claimants who have non-dependents living in their household.

There have been no recent representations to reduce the income bands for non-dependents' earnings for people receiving Housing Benefit.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ **Review of the UK's Defence and Security Industrial Strategy**

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS145\]](#)

I wanted to inform the House of our work to review the UK's defence and security industrial sectors, which will inform the broader Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

The UK has built up a world-leading defence and security industrial base over many decades with a broad footprint across the UK, helping our Armed Forces and the broader national security community to deter or defeat any threat that presents itself. At the same time, these industries make a significant contribution to our prosperity through investment, exports, skills, and research and development. The defence and security industry employs hundreds of thousands of people - including thousands of apprentices - across the breadth of the Union, from building warships in Scotland and armoured vehicles in Wales, to manufacturing aircraft in England and satellites in Northern Ireland. Our industries are also at the forefront of technology development in creating new ways to prevent and defend against terrorism and serious organised crime. And on the international stage, UK defence and security companies play a crucial role in maintaining the UK's global influence, underpinning our strategic partnerships with key allies.

Many of the UK's defence and security companies are flourishing, but suppliers from large companies to SMEs are also now facing a range of challenges for the future. They are impacted by the pace of technological change, the need for innovation and partnership, and increased competition from abroad, alongside the difficulty of sustaining necessary skills. We need to consider how to address these challenges and maximise potential opportunities.

The Integrated Review will define the long-term strategic aims for our national security and foreign policy and determine the capabilities and reforms needed to meet those aims. The review of the UK's defence and security industrial sectors will support this work by considering how to ensure the UK continues to have competitive, innovative and world-class defence and security industries that drive investment and prosperity across the Union, that underpin our national security now and in the future.

The Ministry of Defence will lead a cross-government team to progress this work, engaging closely with industry, Parliament, and other stakeholders over the course of the review. The House will be kept informed as work progresses.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Bovine TB**

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice):

[HCWS148]

I am updating the House on today's publication of the government's response to Professor Sir Charles Godfray's independent review of our 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB (bTB) in England by 2038.

BTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. Around 30,000 cattle have to be slaughtered annually due to infection. Our cattle breeders suffer the loss of prize winning animals and valued herds and this loss creates considerable trauma in the farming industry.

BTB is a very difficult disease to eradicate for a number of reasons. It is a slow moving, insidious disease which is difficult to detect. The diagnostic tests that exist are not perfect; the disease can survive in the environment for several months. BTB is harboured in wildlife with badgers being a known vector. The BCG vaccine provides only limited protection and does not cure infected badgers. There is no example of a country that has successfully eradicated bTB without also addressing the presence of the disease in wildlife.

However, the United Kingdom (UK) has previously managed to turn the tide on bTB and we can do it again. In the 1930s around 40% of cattle herds suffered from bTB. A combination of cattle movement controls, testing and slaughter of infected cattle and wildlife controls through badger culling managed to bring the disease to near eradication by the early 1980s.

However, since the late 1980s, bTB has spread and the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak led to a suspension in testing and then widespread restocking of farms. This meant that in the first five years of this millennium, the disease once again spread rapidly and became our number one animal health challenge.

Our 25-year strategy to eradicate bTB published in 2014 is founded in science. It applies the lessons of our history in previous attempts to control the disease as well as evidence from other countries around the world and trial work conducted in the UK during the 1970s and, more recently, during the Randomised Badger Culling Trial conducted between 1998 and 2007.

The cornerstone of our strategy, as before, is a policy of regular testing and removal of infected cattle from herds. We have also incrementally introduced tougher restrictions on cattle movements from herds at risk of infection and more sensitive tests. We have introduced measures to encourage greater risk management and more information for the keepers of cattle. We have also deployed wildlife controls in areas where the disease is rife and we have deployed new biosecurity measures to try to break the cycle of infection between cattle and badgers.

Since the initial badger cull pilot in 2013, a policy of badger control has been rolled out in many parts of the High Risk Area (HRA) in the south-west and west of England. As of 2019, 57% of the HRA is now subject to a licensed cull of badgers. This policy, while difficult and inevitably contentious, is starting to yield results. The latest epidemiological analysis conducted by Downs and others has shown that the incidence of the disease in

the first cull areas of Somerset and Gloucester has fallen substantially, by 37% and 66% respectively.

However, the badger is an iconic, protected species and no one wants to be culling badgers forever. An intensive badger cull was only ever envisaged as a phase of the strategy, not a perpetual state of affairs. Therefore, five years into the current strategy, it is appropriate to take stock and consider how the policy might be evolved. That is why the government asked Sir Charles to conduct a review of the bTB strategy which concluded in October 2018.

The UK benefits from world-leading science and the government believes we should deploy our expertise to accelerate the development of a deployable cattle vaccine against bTB. While the current BCG vaccine will never provide full protection, the government will accelerate work to authorise a test that can differentiate between the disease and the vaccine, and will provide the funding necessary to initiate the research and trial work needed towards the aim of having a deployable vaccine in the next five years. Vaccination is manifestly easier to deliver to herds of cattle than to wildlife and could significantly reduce the spread of the disease both between cattle and between cattle herds and wildlife. BTB is a global challenge and not every country can afford to test and remove cattle. The UK can harness its world-leading science in developing solutions such as vaccination that would also be valuable to other countries trying to fight the disease.

The government will also begin an exit strategy from the intensive culling of badgers, while ensuring that wildlife control remains a tool that can be deployed where the epidemiological evidence supports it. As soon as possible, we intend to pilot government-funded badger vaccination in at least one area where the four-year cull cycle has concluded, with simultaneous surveillance of disease. Our aim is to identify an exit strategy from culling in those areas that have completed the four years of intensive culling by deploying vaccination to the remaining badger population.

While the government must retain the ability to introduce new cull zones where the disease is rife, our aim will be to allow future badger culls only where the epidemiological evidence points to a significant reservoir of the disease in badgers. We envisage that any remaining areas would join the current cull programme in the next few years and that the badger cull phase of the strategy would then wind down by the mid to late 2020s, although we would need to retain the ability to cull in a targeted way where the epidemiological evidence requires it.

In the Edge Area, where some vaccination projects have been supported, our aim will be to ensure that badger culling is only authorised in areas where the epidemiological evidence points to a problem in badgers. We will continue to support badger vaccination projects in areas where the prevalence of disease is low. We will also investigate the potential for projects where adjacent vaccination and culling could complement each other in controlling disease. Changes to our guidance to Natural England on licensing badger control will be subject to consultation.

Finally, the government will invest in the deployment of better, more frequent and more diverse cattle testing so that we are able to detect the presence of the disease earlier and

remove it from cattle herds faster. As a first step, the frequency of mandatory surveillance testing in two counties which form part of the HRA – Shropshire and Staffordshire – will increase from annual to six-monthly from later this year. We expect this to be extended to all parts of the HRA from 2021. Improving the efficacy of our testing regime through better diagnostics is a key component of a successful strategy.

There is no single answer to tackling the scourge of bTB but by deploying a range of policy interventions, we can turn the tide on this terrible disease and achieve our long-term objective of eradicating it by 2038.

JUSTICE

■ Consultation on Improving the Victims' Code and the Government Response to the 2019 Consultation: 'Proposals for revising the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime'

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):

[\[HCWS150\]](#)

Today, I am launching this Government's consultation on a draft revised Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Code) and the response to last year's consultation on proposed changes to the Code.

The consultation builds on that undertaken last summer and is another major step towards meeting the commitment made in the cross-Government Victims' Strategy to strengthen the Victims' Code. It also fulfils our statutory obligations under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 to publish and consult on a draft version before amending the Code.

We are grateful to victims, stakeholders and the public at large who took time to respond to the initial consultation. We have carefully considered their responses which wholeheartedly endorsed our proposed approach to change. Their views have helped us to create the draft revised version of the Code and have played a significant part in helping us identify the key changes that we believe need to be made to ensure that victims' rights are set out in a clearer, more coherent and meaningful way for victims.

It is vital that those who are caught up in the criminal justice system understand their rights and the minimum levels of service and information they should receive from criminal justice agencies.

We therefore propose to make a number of changes to the Code, but I want to be clear that the minimum levels of service and information that victims are currently entitled to under the existing Code will be maintained. Rather, the changes are designed to strengthen existing rights and deliver an improved service for victims, helping them to cope better when they may be experiencing trauma in the aftermath of a crime.

Building on the proposals made in the first consultation, key proposals include:

- Amending the Code's structure and reducing its complexity, bringing together the current five chapters into one concise Code. We have merged the large number of existing entitlements and set these out as 12 clear overarching rights;

- While we have retained the existing eligibility categories for access to enhanced support and information, we have made clearer in the draft revised Code that service providers have the discretion to offer enhanced rights to victims who fall outside the scope of the existing categories;
- For the first time, victims of unrestricted mentally disordered patients in the Victim Contact Scheme will be allocated National Probation Service Victim Liaison Officers bringing greater parity in services for these victims, comparable to those received by victims of restricted patients;
- Again, for the first time, the draft revised Code specifically sets out the entitlements of victims of Foreign National Offenders; and
- We have also included practical information about how victims can access services provided by the National Health Service (NHS) and sign-posted them to where they can get help and advice if they are approached by the media.

Alongside our work to refine the Code, we are already looking into how to build victim awareness of the Code and their rights, including creating a short, user friendly overview and an online summary for victims. We are also working with Police and Crime Commissioners and Local Criminal Justice Partnerships to monitor and improve compliance with the Code.

After we have published the revised Code, we will turn to consulting on the detail of a Victims' Law that will guarantee victims their rights and look to further strengthen enforcement of the Code.

The consultation is available at: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/victim-policy/consultation-on-improving-the-victims-code>

■ Probation Update

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):

[\[HCWS151\]](#)

On 6 December 2019 Joseph McCann was given thirty-three life sentences at the Central Criminal Court for a series of violent sexual attacks which he committed between 21 April and 6 May that same year. His victims, ranging from an 11-year-old boy to a 71-year-old woman, each suffered a terrifying ordeal, and I pay tribute to them for the courage which they showed in giving evidence to secure McCann's conviction. Mr Justice Edis ordered that McCann serve a minimum of thirty years before being eligible for release on parole.

When he started these attacks, McCann was being supervised on licence by the National Probation Service, having been released automatically from prison on 15 February, after he had served half of a three-year determinate sentence for burglary and robbery offences, less time spent on remand. However, an initial management review and then a full Serious Further Offence (SFO) review confirmed that the Court imposed that sentence on 25 January 2018 on the understanding that it would run concurrent to a recall to prison in connection with an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) which he had received in 2009 for aggravated burglary. However, staff in

the National Probation Service (NPS) South East and Eastern Division failed to recall McCann, both when he was remanded into custody on 21 August 2017 and when he received the new sentence on 25 January 2018. Had he been recalled, he would not have been released automatically on 15 February last year; rather, the Parole Board would have conducted a full risk assessment in order to determine whether it was safe to release him on licence.

There was only a limited amount which could be shared publicly, whilst we awaited the outcome of McCann's trial, but under Ministerial direction officials re-launched the Recall Policy Framework in early July, giving NPS Divisional Directors and Chief Executives of Community Rehabilitation Companies personal responsibility for ensuring that their staff understood the purpose of recall and the threshold for recall. Then, in January this year, alongside the Recall Policy Framework, new mandatory training on recall for all probation staff was launched together with fresh operational guidance, to support staff in the judgments which they need to make when presented with evidence of an offender's increased risk or an offender breaching licence conditions.

As a vital part of our service to victims, the NPS offers victims the opportunity to receive a copy of the SFO review, redacted only to fulfil our statutory obligations to protect the rights to privacy of third parties. After McCann had been sentenced on 6 December, NPS Victim Liaison Officers contacted McCann's victims and asked them whether they would like to meet an Assistant Chief of Probation, in order to have the findings of the SFO review explained to them and to hear the action which has been taken to address the failings which the SFO review sets out. Meetings were then arranged, having regard to the victims' preferences and availability, the first on 27 February and the final one on 5 March.

Our primary responsibility is towards the victims, which is why I have waited until they have received the full SFO review before announcing further measures.

In order to address the serious concerns which have arisen in this case and to provide wider public assurance, I have decided, exceptionally, to publish a version of the SFO review. This is not the full review, necessarily redacted, which has been shared with McCann's victims, but it is a thorough and open account of what went wrong in this case and what has been done to put it right.

Further, so we can be absolutely sure that all the lessons of this terrible case have been learned and addressed, I have asked Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation, Justin Russell, to conduct an independent review. Justin has decided that the review will be in two parts: the first by pursuing specific lines of enquiry in relation to the management of McCann in custody and in the community and by considering whether HMPPS has taken all the organisational action necessary to improve practice in the areas in which it was found wanting, the second to take a wider look on the culture and understanding of recall in the Probation Service. The Chief Inspector has placed the terms of reference for his review here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-work/inquiriesandreviews/>

When I receive the Chief Inspector's reports, I will consider whether more needs to be done to strengthen probation practice. I am determined to do all that is necessary to protect the public from known offenders. They, and McCann's victims in particular, deserve no less.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Annual Report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS149\]](#)

I have today laid before both Houses a copy of the annual report of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner. The report was submitted by the new Commissioner, Sir Brian Leveson, but covers the year 2018 and was drafted by Sir Brian's predecessor, Lord Justice Fulford.

Overall, this report demonstrates that the security and intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies and other relevant public authorities show extremely high levels of operational competence combined with respect for the law. The report also sets out the breadth and complexity of the powers covered by the 2016 Act and other legislation, and offers constructive criticism on the practical framework and individual instances of how these are used. Where IPCO have identified problems, departments and agencies have worked vigorously to address these.

Further to Section 234 of the 2016 Act, the Commissioner has also submitted to me a confidential annex to the Report, dealing with the work of the intelligence agencies. I concur with the Commissioner that publication of this annex would be prejudicial to national security and not in the public interest. However, I can confirm that the Annex does not raise substantive concerns or criticisms not covered in the main report.

I would like to add that this Report demonstrates the high quality of the oversight of our intelligence and security agencies' use of the most intrusive powers. I am satisfied that our arrangements are amongst the strongest and most effective in the world.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the current and previous Commissioners and their staff for their work, as well as echoing the Commissioners' thanks to the agencies and departments and civil society organisations which have helped with the establishment of IPCO over the past few years.

I commend this report to the House.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS152\]](#)

In the early hours of this morning, Flybe ceased trading.

We appreciate the impact this will have on Flybe passengers and employees. Our immediate priority is to ensure passengers are kept informed of alternative travel options and employees who have lost their jobs are assisted in accessing support and advice. We know this will be a worrying time for Flybe staff and our Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service stands ready to help anyone whose job may be at risk.

Affected passengers have been advised not to turn up to the airport. For those passengers who did arrive at UK airports today, HMG in-person support has been available to provide them with information. The majority of Flybe's destinations are served by different transport options, and we have asked train and coach operators to accept Flybe tickets and other airlines to offer reduced rescue fares to ensure passengers can make their journeys as smoothly as possible. Following talks with Britain's train operators, all Flybe staff and customers will be offered a free, alternative way home this week. To redeem the journey, present your employee ID or flight confirmation details. Government staff will continue to further assist at airports. A number of airlines have stepped forward to provide rescue fares for passengers.

For the small number of passengers who are abroad, there is sufficient capacity on other commercial airlines to return to the UK. Again, the CAA is encouraging these airlines to offer rescue fares. The CAA website will also provide information on how people may be able to claim back money they have spent on tickets from travel insurance providers, travel agents or their credit card providers.

We are urgently working with industry to identify opportunities to re-establish key routes, and have spoken with airlines and airports today to emphasise this. We are pleased to see that airlines have already committed to operating a number of these routes in the near future.

I am conscious of the impact on all regions of the UK, particularly Northern Ireland given the importance of air-based connectivity. The Aviation Minister has spoken to counterparts in the Devolved Administrations to ensure they are kept informed of the latest developments and are aware of the response plans put in place by my department and the Civil Aviation Authority.

Levelling up connectivity across our regions and nations is a top priority for this government, which is why we are undertaking a review of regional connectivity to ensure the UK has the domestic transport connections local communities rely on – including regional airports. The Treasury is also reviewing Air Passenger Duty (APD) to ensure regional connectivity is supported while meeting the UK's climate change commitments to meet net zero by 2050.

These measures featured in conversations with Flybe back in January and, in turn, they agreed to continue operating.

Since then, we explored multiple options with Flybe's shareholders to find a solution, but the directors decided it was not viable to keep Flybe operating. Unfortunately, in a competitive market companies do fail, but it is not the role of government to prop them up.

Globally, aviation is facing challenges due to the impact of coronavirus. The Government is well prepared for this. As the wider economic picture becomes clearer, the Chancellor has said that he stands ready to announce further support where needed. I have today written to Airport Coordination Limited, the independent UK slot coordinator, asking them to explicitly take in to account the implications of flying empty planes on the UK's environmental commitments in reaching decisions on slot alleviation in relation to coronavirus.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Reaching State Pension Age on Universal Credit

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):

[\[HCWS146\]](#)

I can today announce that we will amend regulations to smooth the transition from Universal Credit to pensioner benefits and remove any potential gap in support.

All those who reach State Pension Age while claiming Universal Credit will receive a run-on, meaning that they can receive a payment for the entire Assessment Period in which they reach State Pension Age. Entitlement to pensioner benefits and State Pension is unaffected and continues as usual. This ensures there is no gap in benefit provision as people approach State Pension Age. This will benefit approximately 200,000 pensioners who will benefit by an average of £350 from this run-on at a cost of around £70 million over the next five years.

This process is already in operation on an extra statutory basis, ensuring that nobody loses out upon reaching State Pension Age, and legislation will be amended accordingly later this year.

■ Surplus Earnings

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery (Will Quince):

[\[HCWS147\]](#)

The surplus earnings policy was introduced to prevent people who are paid large amounts of earnings on an irregular basis from receiving a greater amount of benefit and earnings than claimants who for example earn the same annual salary but are paid over 12 regular salary payments.

This means that where a claimant receives a large payment of earnings within an assessment period which is sufficient to end their Universal Credit award, and then reclaims Universal Credit within 6 months of that award ending, earnings above the de minimis level will be taken into account as earnings for the new award.

I will sign a Determination to extend the current £2,500 Universal Credit surplus earnings de minimis level from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and will place a copy in the library. This will safeguard the efficient administration of Universal Credit by not reducing the de minimis to £300 as provided by the Universal Credit Regulations 2013.

This measure will cost £70m in 2020/21 and will mean around 500,000 fewer people will see their Universal Credit award reduced by surplus earnings.