



Daily Report

Monday, 9 March 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 9 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:06 P.M., 09 March 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Gross Negligence Manslaughter and Culpable Homicide Independent Review

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24261\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the report of the Independent review of gross negligence manslaughter and culpable homicide, commissioned by the General Medical Council, published in June 2019, whether the CPS has taken steps to implement the recommendation on enhancing the transparency and understanding of its decision-making process.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS published updated legal guidance on gross negligence manslaughter in May 2019, to help make decision-making in these cases more transparent and to provide comprehensive and up-to-date guidance on the offence of gross negligence manslaughter in a medical setting, incorporating the recent relevant case law.

Evidence of medical experts will be required in all cases of medical manslaughter. Experts have to be suitably qualified and are selected on the basis of having recent and relevant expertise on the area of medicine concerned. Experts are provided with terms of reference on the elements of the offence before providing their advice. For cases where a charging decision of gross negligence manslaughter is under consideration, the prosecutor and counsel will meet with the expert to discuss the report and the evidential test. Any information which meets the disclosure test will be provided to the defence if a prosecution is commenced.

Since April 2019, all case decisions relating to charges of gross negligence manslaughter are made by specialist prosecutors or senior specialist prosecutors within the CPS Special Crime Division, and are taken in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

■ Law: Education

Jim Shannon:

[\[24347\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Education to teach an understanding of the law among young people.

Michael Ellis:

I chair a Public Legal Education Committee, and regularly engage with stakeholders and other government departments to explore how we can increase public understanding of the law.

I work closely with my Ministerial colleagues to improve provision of Public Legal Education, and I recently met with The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Education, to discuss how to ensure young people have a strong understanding of the law.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Carbon Emissions: Northern Ireland****Colum Eastwood:**[\[24453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the Northern Ireland Executive in reaching its net zero carbon emissions targets.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Ministers and officials in the Department engage regularly with counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive on a wide range of issues relating to climate change and emissions reduction. We are committed to collaborative engagement in support of the UK's net zero target and interim carbon budgets, including through regular Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Quad meetings.

In addition, the independent Committee on Climate Change published a report in February 2019 advising on how Northern Ireland can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet UK-wide emissions reduction targets between now and 2030 ('Reducing emissions in Northern Ireland').

■ Climate Change Convention: Glasgow**Theresa Villiers:**[\[24284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what international leaders he plans to meet as part of preparations for the UN Conference of the Parties in Glasgow.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The successful delivery of COP26 will require widespread diplomatic engagement with our international partners at all levels. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, along with the Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues, will meet a number of international leaders at key moments throughout the year in order to encourage greater climate ambition and achieve an ambitious, shared outcome at COP26.

■ Consumers: Protection**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[25031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Friends have been trained through the National Trading Standards' Friends Against Scams initiative in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland in 2019.

Paul Scully:

The Friends Against Scams initiative protects and prevents people from becoming victims of scams. In 2019, 208,158 people joined the scheme, bringing the total number to over 412,800. Regional figures are not available to National Trading Standards.

■ Energy Intensive Industries: Carbon Emissions

Alex Cunningham:

[\[25095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been allocated to help energy intensive industries move to low-carbon techniques.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has schemes worth nearly £2 billion operating, or in development, supporting our vital energy intensive industries to decarbonise. These schemes include the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund to help companies reduce their fuel bills and transition to low carbon technologies, the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge to support industry with the deployment of low-carbon technologies in industrial clusters, and the ISCF Transformation Foundation Industries competition to improve the resource and energy efficiency of foundation industries.

■ Energy Supply: Northern Ireland

Colum Eastwood:

[\[24454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that Northern Ireland has security of energy supply.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Energy policy in Northern Ireland is largely a devolved matter under the responsibility for the Northern Ireland Executive.

In relation to electricity, the Single Electricity Market (SEM) is an example of North-South cooperation that has benefited consumers and the economies of Northern Ireland and Ireland and supports the stability of energy supply on the island of Ireland. The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol to the Withdrawal Agreement provides the basis for the SEM to continue after January 2021. Within the SEM, the Capacity Remuneration Mechanism helps ensure that generation capacity is sufficient to meet demand. The Moyle Interconnector, linking electricity markets in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, also strengthens Northern Ireland's security of supply, and the proposed North-South Interconnector between Ireland and Northern Ireland will further enhance this.

In relation to gas, the UK gas market is one of the world's most developed and provides security from highly diverse and flexible sources of gas supply. Over the past 10 years, analysis undertaken by the UK Government and others has delivered a consistent message: the gas system is secure in the face of all but the most extreme and unlikely shocks.

■ Energy: Meters

Catherine West:

[\[25171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to take steps to ensure that households with pre-paid electricity meters

continue to have electricity in the event that occupants are required to self-isolate as a result of covid-19.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

At the end of 2019 36% of all prepayment meters were smart meters in pre-payment mode, which enable energy consumers to top up without needing to leave their homes.

There are existing general protections for traditional prepayment meter customers who are unable to access top-up outlets, including emergency credit if credit has been exhausted on the meter. Suppliers also operate a friendly hour's policy, when supply would not be interrupted, normally during evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays.

For traditional prepayment meters, suppliers can also send pre-loaded keycards to customers to provide additional credit, where consumers need to self-isolate for a longer period of time. The consumer would need to inform their supplier that they need assistance.

The Department is actively engaging with Ofgem and industry to ensure all customers receive the support they need.

■ **Ethnic Groups**

Bridget Phillipson:

[24326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question 13518 on Unemployment: Ethnic Groups, what estimate he has made of the average wage of workers from BAME backgrounds.

Paul Scully:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published estimates of the earnings for different ethnic groups in Great Britain.

In 2018, on average, the median gross hourly pay for people from an ethnic minority background was £11.54.

The full analysis can be found in the link below:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandwork/nghours/articles/ethnicitypaygapsingreatbritain/2018>

■ **Horizon Europe**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[24259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to make a decision on the UK's association with Horizon Europe.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government will continue to collaborate with Europe on scientific research, and the UK's negotiating approach states that the UK is ready to consider participation in certain EU programmes, including Horizon Europe.

The shape and content of EU Programmes post-2020, including Horizon Europe, are currently being negotiated in the EU Institutions and have not yet been finalised. These EU Programmes must be adopted by the EU before arrangements for potential UK participation could be finalised.

■ Natural Gas: Housing

Dr Julian Lewis:

[24993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the cost of phasing out the use of natural gas in domestic dwellings; what the planned timescale is for phasing out the use of natural gas in such dwellings; whether such phasing out will be carried out by the UK (a) only on a multilateral basis or (b) irrespective of what the governments of other countries plan to do; and what funding he plans for implementing that policy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Meeting our net-zero target by 2050 will require virtually all heat in buildings to be decarbonised, and heat in industry to be reduced to close to zero carbon emissions. It will involve large-scale transformation and wide-ranging change to energy systems and markets. The way heating is supplied to over 28 million homes, businesses and industrial users will need to change. Given the diversity of heat demand in the United Kingdom, no one solution can provide the best option for everyone. We are currently exploring and testing the different approaches to heat decarbonisation, including heat networks, heat pumps, hydrogen and biogas and improving energy efficiency in new buildings. - a mix of technologies and customer options will need to be available to decarbonise heat at scale.

The Department is developing policies to deliver low carbon heating in the 2020s and meet our climate targets. We are 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. 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 and set us on a path to decarbonising all homes and buildings.

Alongside the action we are taking at home, the UK remains committed to demonstrating global leadership in tackling climate change. The UK is already demonstrating practical leadership across all aspects of the fight to tackle climate change. We've decarbonised faster than any other G20 nation since 2000, and through our Clean Growth Strategy and annual reports have a comprehensive and publicly available strategy. The UK is among the largest contributors of climate finance, providing at least £5.8 billion between 2016 to 2020 to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce deforestation and support cleaner economic growth. At the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019, the Prime Minister announced that the UK will double our International Climate Finance to at least £11.6 billion from 2021 to 2025 to drive clean and resilient growth in developing countries.

■ Trains: Hydrogen**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[25168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of hydrogen-powered trains on railways.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to exploring the option of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, alongside electricity and other decarbonised gases to support the UK's net zero target. We are investing up to £121m in hydrogen innovation across the value chain and have announced a £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund which will support deployment of low carbon hydrogen production facilities. Hydrogen could play a key role in decarbonising parts of the transport network that are currently hard to electrify, including on the rail network. The Government welcomes the development of viable hydrogen-powered rolling stock by Alstom working with rolling stock owners Eversholt and Porterbrook Leasing with Birmingham University, and recognises the opportunity to build a distinctive UK capability.

■ Unfair Dismissal**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[25035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 21910, whether his Department plans to make an assessment of the merits of including measures to decrease the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims to one year in the Employment Rights Bill.

Paul Scully:

The Government has no plans to make an assessment of the merits of decreasing the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims to one year. The qualifying period aims to strike the right balance between fairness for employees and flexibility for employers.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Borders: Northern Ireland****Stephen Farry:** [\[23655\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress the Government has made on preparations for the implementation of the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol.

Stephen Farry: [\[23656\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the document entitled Future relationship with the European Union, published February 2020, what additional checks across the Irish Sea arising from the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol will be required.

Stephen Farry:

[23657]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how the Northern Ireland executive will be represented on the (a) Joint Committee and (b) Specialised Committee with regard to implementation of the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol.

Stephen Farry:

[24455]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his oral contribution of 27 February 2020, Official Report, column 484, what his definition is of appropriately implemented in relation to the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Hon. Member to the oral statement made by my Rt Hon friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 27 February 2020 ([Official Record, Vol.672 Col.467-470](#))

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

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has been clear in his statement given on 19 October 2019 ([Official Record, Vol. 666, Col. 570-572](#)) that Northern Ireland remains part of the UK customs territory.

■ **Boris Johnson: Grenfell Tower Inquiry**

Steve Reed:

[25103]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has submitted a witness statement to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in Module Five in his capacity as a previous (a) Chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and (b) Mayor of London.

Chloe Smith:

The Inquiries Act 2005 empowers the Chair of an Inquiry to require the production of evidence, including from witnesses. The Prime Minister has received no requests for a witness statement from the Chair of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The London Fire Commissioner (which replaced LFEPA in 2017) is a core participant in the Inquiry.

■ **Cabinet Office: Third Sector**

Robert Halfon:

[19825]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the total amount of funding from the public purse given by his Department to (a) civil society and (b) campaigning bodies in each of the last five years.

Chloe Smith:

Grant agreement terms and conditions prohibit grant funding being used for paid for lobbying and political campaigning.

Data regarding Cabinet Office funding in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 is published in the Government Grants register on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-grants-register>. Data for the 2018/2019 financial year will be published in due course.

■ **Civil Servants**

Bridget Phillipson: [24327]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of civil servants' (a) parents and (b) guardians are also civil servants.

Chloe Smith:

The information requested is not routinely collected.

■ **Civil Service: Veterans**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [24257]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the policy to guarantee interviews for veterans seeking Civil Service jobs applies throughout the UK.

Johnny Mercer:

The UK Civil Service operates in all parts of the Union and our commitment to make it easier for Veterans to join is UK wide. Civil Service employment policies take into account legislation and employment factors throughout the UK, but we are working to implement this policy in Northern Ireland.

■ **Exports and Imports: Republic of Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [25222]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2020 to Question 13946 on Exports and Imports: Republic of Ireland, what proportion of GDP the import figures for (a) 2009 and (b) 2019.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ25222.pdf]

■ **List of Ministerial Responsibilities**

Andrew Gwynne: [25033]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 21909, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of setting targets for the publication of the List of Ministerial Responsibilities; and if he will take steps to publish an updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities on GOV.UK within two weeks of any change to ministerial responsibilities.

Chloe Smith:

Further to my answer of 3rd March 2020 to [PQ21909](#), the Government has no plans to introduce a specific publication target.

■ Older People

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[25030\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of centenarians in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland in 2019.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ25030.pdf]

■ Public Bodies

Naz Shah:

[\[24363\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that the boards of public bodies are representative.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. member to the response given to PQ [23397](#) on 5 March 2020.

■ Technical Alternative Arrangements Advisory Group

Simon Hoare:

[\[23533\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates meetings of the Government's Technical Alternative Arrangements Advisory Group took place since June 2019.

Simon Hoare:

[\[23539\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates meetings of the Government's Business and Business and Trade Union Alternative Arrangements Advisory Group took place since June 2019.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Alternative Arrangements Technical Advisory Group met on the 20th June, 17th July and 12th September 2019.

The Alternative Arrangements Business and Trade Union Advisory Group met on 26th June, 10th July and 29th August 2019.

The new Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland in the Withdrawal Agreement which was agreed with the EU on the 17th October 2019 and ratified by the UK on the 23rd January 2020 ensures the whole of the UK will be a single customs territory outside the EU Customs Union. It replaces the backstop provisions of the previous Withdrawal Agreement.

Technology: Finance**Chi Onwurah:**[\[22387\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding from the public purse has been allocated to support the development of (a) quantum computing (b) 5G technologies, (c) cyber security and (d) artificial intelligence in the (i) 2018-19, (ii) 2019-20 and (iii) 2020-21 financial years.

Penny Mordaunt:

Quantum computing; 5G technologies and artificial intelligence are all areas which offer significant economic opportunities to the UK, as well as risks to our national cyber security that need to be managed.

Our development of Quantum Computing is funded by combined public and private investment through the UK's ten year National Quantum Technologies Programme (NQTP).

Our current National Cyber Security Strategy (2016-2021) is delivering transformational change, building new capabilities and intervening to address the cyber threat. It is supported by £1.9bn investment designed to transform our resilience and continue to build our position as an innovative and expert world leader in cyber security.

The government's Sector Deal for AI launched in April 2018 and outlined a package of support for the sector.

Veterans: Medals**Carol Monaghan:**[\[25154\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Advisory Military Sub-Committee has heard representation on the case for service medals for veterans who were present at British nuclear tests.

Chloe Smith:

The assessment of historic medals claims is a matter for the independent Advisory Military Sub-Committee (AMSC). Campaigners can be assured their case is under review and recommendations will be made as soon as possible.

DEFENCE**Armoured Fighting Vehicles****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[23454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to end the service life of the FV107 Scimitar.

Jeremy Quin:

The current planned out of service date for Scimitar is 2023.

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[24277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the expected into-service date of Ajax armoured vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

AJAX is a highly complex project, delivering the first fully digitised vehicle in the Land domain.

AJAX's in service date is projected to be July 2020 though work is currently underway to confirm the achievability of this date.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[24280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse is of the challenger 2 life extension programme; and when are vehicles produced through that programme expected to enter into service.

Jeremy Quin:

Challenger 2 remains a key capability for the Armed Forces as the British Army's main battle tank. The Challenger 2 Life Extension Programme will provide a suite of capability upgrades and substantially extend its service life.

Commercial negotiations surrounding the Challenger 2 Life Extension Project are being conducted and therefore it is not possible to disclose costs at this stage.

Similarly, these negotiations will establish in service delivery dates.

■ Artillery: Decommissioning

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[24276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the expected out-of-service dates of AS-90s; and if he will make a statement on its replacement.

Jeremy Quin:

The expected out-of-service date for the AS-90 is 2030. Work is underway to identify a replacement to respond to the threats we will face out to the 2050s.

■ Cameroon: Military Aid

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[23513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what training UK armed forces are providing to the (a) armed forces and (b) security forces of the Government of Cameroon.

James Heappey:

The UK has a longstanding relationship with Cameroon; we provide limited military capacity building which includes training on human rights. The UK and Cameroon cooperate closely in the fight against Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa.

■ Coronavirus

Jessica Morden:

[\[24298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) guidance and (b) equipment has been issued to (i) military commanders, (ii) civilian staff and (iii) defence equipment contractors on (A) UK military bases and (B) overseas deployment for responding to a covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has put in place plans to ensure the delivery of its key operations in the UK and overseas. Guidance to all Defence personnel refers to advice issued by the NHS, Public Health England and the FCO. This is being widely distributed and displayed across the Department, both in the UK and overseas. Where additional information is required to support operational deployment, that is also being provided.

All Defence Medical staff have access to the recommended medical Personal Protective Equipment appropriate to their role and are fully trained in its safe use. The provision of Personal Protective Equipment to other MOD personnel would be conducted in accordance with Public Health England advice and as appropriate to their role.

Jessica Morden:

[\[24299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with his NATO counterparts on (a) cancelling or (b) postponing joint military exercises in response to covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence has regular discussions with NATO allies about NATO joint military exercises. At present, the NATO major training and exercise programmes are continuing as planned. We will continue to closely monitor and assess the situation.

■ Defence Equipment: Cost Effectiveness

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[23498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to double the efficiency savings in the Equipment Plan 2019-2029 compared with the previous cost forecast.

Jeremy Quin:

[Holding answer 5 March 2020]: The Ministry of Defence is embedding an improved approach to identifying and developing efficiencies through its Transformation programme, which will allow greater insight into the risks and maturity of efficiencies, including those within the Equipment Plan. We are also taking practical steps in the management of our equipment projects to encourage efficiency, for example improving commercial negotiation and project management skills. The increase in forecast efficiency delivery reported is due to benefits resulting from these changes,

including new initiatives identified, the increased maturity of existing plans to reduce cost, and improvements in our understanding of their potential financial benefits.

■ Defence Equipment: Costs

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[23543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what changes he has made to each defence programme to enable a reduction in forecast costs of £11.9 billion in his 2019-2029 Equipment Plan.

Jeremy Quin:

[Holding answer 5 March 2020]: Updated cost forecasts represent our latest analysis of the realistic cost of programmes as they progress. The Equipment Plan 2019 has identified a £5.3 billion forecast reduction based on past performance compared to the Equipment Plan 2018.

■ Defence: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the recommendation on page 8 of the NAO's report, The equipment plan 2019 to 2029, HC 111, 2019-29, published on 27 February 2020, whether his Department has plans to recruit financial specialists to increase the accuracy of his Department's cost forecasting.

Jeremy Quin:

Within the Finance Function, the Cost Assurance and Analysis Service (CAAS) plays a key role in the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) drive for Value For Money, leading on cost management development across Defence. CAAS has ISO accreditation as a professional cost management organisation with a team of over 300, including professional staff in the areas of Cost Accountancy, Cost Engineering and Cost Estimating. In Financial Year 2019-20 CAAS grew its Cost Estimating capability, with the arrival of an additional 40 graduate estimators. These staff have been recruited directly into CAAS on a bespoke 2 year Estimating Development Scheme.

In Financial Year 2020-21, CAAS plans to develop a bespoke E-Academy to provide cost management training on a virtual basis across a wider cohort of MOD finance and estimating staff. This will sit alongside ongoing work to share and embed leading cost management practice across Defence.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the NAO's report of 27 February 2020, The equipment plan 2019 to 2029, HC 111, 2019-20, what the percentages are of (a) USD and (b) EU foreign exchange rate losses of the £1.5 billion losses referenced in that report.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the NAO's report of 27 February 2020, The equipment plan 2019 to 2029, HC 111, 2019-20, which defence

programmes have been responsible for the foreign exchange rate losses of £1.5 billion referenced in that report.

Jeremy Quin:

The assessment of affordability presented in the Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan report of 27 February 2020 includes forecast costs for foreign currency using the most likely exchange rates at the reporting date (April 2019). The NAO calculated that these costs could be £1.5 billion more over 10-years based on less favourable exchange rates in October 2019. All of this was due to US Dollar exchange rate changes. Forecast exchange rates have since improved so these additional costs no longer represent the most likely outcome, though the Department recognises the risk of additional costs as exchange rates fluctuate in response to events.

The Department plans on the basis of most likely costs using foreign exchange rate forecasts from professional forecasting agencies and theoretical economic models. The department limits the risk of additional costs by purchasing a proportion of demand up to three years in advance at fixed prices using services provided by the Bank of England and HM Treasury. The impact of short-term variations in foreign exchange rates are managed as part of the routine financial management of the defence programme.

■ **Mali: Armed Forces**

Jonathan Edwards: [\[25070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the length of time that the armed forces will be deployed in Mali.

James Heappey:

The UK's commitment to the UN's peacekeeping mission in Mali is constantly reviewed to ensure that our Armed Forces are used in the most effective way.

■ **Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the cost of the support package for the P-8 aircraft was included in the Equipment Plan 2019-29.

Jeremy Quin:

Yes. Support costs for the Royal Air Force Poseidon MRA Mk1 fleet are included in the Equipment Plan.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which company is operating the support package for the P-8 aircraft; and what UK workshare has been negotiated for this contract.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which United States company will maintain the engines of the UK's P-8 fleet.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 4 March 2020, to Question 21172.

Attachments:

1. 21172 - Maritime Patrol Aircraft [21172 - Maritime Patrol Aircraft (1).docx]

■ **Ministry of Defence: Cultural Heritage**

Deidre Brock:

[\[22399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) names and (b) locations are of the (i) listed buildings and (ii) scheduled monuments under his Department's (A) ownership and (B) control.

Jeremy Quin:

A list of names and locations of the listed buildings and scheduled monuments under his Department's ownership and control will be placed in the Library of the House.

The list includes 778 scheduled monuments and 851 listed buildings that are located on the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) estate.

All sites on the list are deemed to be in MOD control by virtue of being Defence establishments.

The list is limited to the UK estate.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence's Estate [Copy of Annex 1 -PQ02891 -amended -1.xls]
2. Ministry of Defence's Estate [Copy of Annex 1 -PQ02891 -amended -2.xls]

■ **Ministry of Defence: Empty Property**

Deidre Brock:

[\[22396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list his Department's unused properties in Scotland; and what plans he has for each of those properties.

Jeremy Quin:

As of 2 March 2020, there are 863 unused Ministry of Defence (MOD) properties in Scotland. These properties are Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and a complete list by county can be found below:

ABERDEENSHIRE	4
Angus	27
Argyll and Bute	133

ABERDEENSHIRE	4
Ayrshire	7
Dumbarton	4
Edinburgh	159
Fife	206
Inverness-shire	29
Isle of Benbecula	6
Midlothian	23
Moray	234
North Lanarkshire	3
Perth	1
Renfrewshire	21
Stirling	6

The Department needs to maintain a management margin of 10% vacant properties at each location so that there are sufficient homes of the appropriate size to accommodate Service Personnel when required. Although currently above this level at 27%, the Department has a plan to reduce these as part of the work to achieve a 10% management margin by Autumn 2021.

MOD continues to maintain vacant properties in Scotland at minimum Decent Homes Standard to allow their allocation to Service families, while looking for opportunities to better utilise or further rationalise the SFA estate.

■ Ministry of Defence: Listed Buildings

Deidre Brock:

[\[22395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) names and (b) locations are of the non-inhabited listed buildings on his Department's estate.

Jeremy Quin:

A list of names and locations of the non-inhabited listed buildings on the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) estate will be placed in the Library of the House.

The list consists of 463 sites that are located on the MOD's estate.

The list is limited to the UK estate.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence's Estate [Copy of Annex A -PQ02883 - Amended.xlsx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Nature Conservation

Deidre Brock:

[\[22398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the (a) sites and areas of special scientific interest, (b) special protection areas and (c) special areas of conservation under his Department's (i) ownership and (ii) control.

Jeremy Quin:

A list of the Sites and Areas of Special Scientific Interest; Special Protection Areas and Special Areas for Conservation within the Defence estate will be placed in the Library of the House.

The list includes land that is either freehold, leasehold or a combination of both.

All sites on the list are deemed to be in Ministry of Defence control by virtue of being Defence establishments.

The list is limited to the UK estate.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence's Estate [Copy of Annex PQ02887 and PQ02889.xlsx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Wetlands

Deidre Brock:

[\[22397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) location and (b) condition is of Ramsar sites in his Department's (i) ownership and (ii) control.

Jeremy Quin:

A list of the location of Ramsar sites within the Defence estate will be placed in the Library of the House.

The list includes land that is either freehold, leasehold or a combination of both.

All sites on the list are deemed to be in Ministry of Defence (MOD) control by virtue of being Defence establishments.

The list is limited to the UK estate.

No information is held with regards to the condition of Ramsar sites with MOD ownership or control.

Attachments:

1. Ministry of Defence's Estate [Copy of Annex PQ02887 and PQ02889.xlsx]

■ Nuclear Weapons: Testing

Carol Monaghan:

[\[25151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the medical conditions of descendants of veterans who were present at the British nuclear testing programme.

Carol Monaghan:

[\[25153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to provide compensation for (a) veterans who were present at British nuclear tests and (b) their descendants.

Johnny Mercer:

There is no published peer-reviewed evidence of excess illness or mortality among nuclear test veterans as a group that could be linked to their participation in the tests or to exposure to radiation because of that participation. The Ministry of Defence has also seen no evidence of excessive ill-health or mortality among the descendants of nuclear test veterans.

Nuclear test veterans who believe they have suffered ill-health due to service have the right to apply for no-fault compensation under the War Pension Scheme. War Pensions are payable in respect of illness or injury as a result of service in the Armed Forces before 6 April 2005, with the benefit of reasonable doubt always given to the claimant. Decisions are medically certified and follow consideration of available service and medical evidence and carry full rights of appeal to an independent tribunal.

The Ministry of Defence has no plans to provide compensation to the descendants of nuclear test veterans.

Carol Monaghan:

[\[25152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for which medical disorders veterans who were present at British nuclear tests can claim a war disablement pension.

Johnny Mercer:

All ex-service personnel, including Nuclear Test Veterans, can claim a War Pension in respect of their service before 6 April 2005.

Nuclear Test Veterans can claim for any condition which they consider may have been caused, or made worse, by their service. Each claim is considered on its own merits.

■ **Peacekeeping Operations: Mali**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[24352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK armed forces personnel will be deployed to support the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali.

James Heappey:

The UK remains committed to the UN's peacekeeping mission in Mali.

■ **Type 23 Frigates: Repairs and Maintenance**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual cost has been of each maintenance period for the Type 23 Frigate since 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

The amount spent on non-fleet time maintenance and repair for each of the 13 Type 23 frigates in each year since 2010 is the attached in the table.

Attachments:

1. Annex A [20200305-Annex to PQN-19-21-2020-03065.docx]

■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Government Furnished Equipment list is for the Type 31 Frigate.

Jeremy Quin:

The Government Furnished Equipment list for the Type 31 Frigates includes a number of sensitive Ministry of Defence strategic assets. The disclosure of this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness and security of the Armed Forces.

■ VE Day: Scotland**John Lamont:**[\[23420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his plans are for marking VE Day in Scotland.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence will be providing support to the Scottish Government's and Royal British Legion Scotland's joint commemorations in Edinburgh of the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. Additionally, the British Army's 51 Brigade, in concert with the city's Lord Provost, will organise a People's Parade through Glasgow. Defence will provide Armed Forces bands, parading Service personnel and flypasts for the commemorations in both Edinburgh and Glasgow.

■ Vehicles: Land Rover**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[24278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to identify a replacement for the Land Rover Wolf.

Jeremy Quin:

The Army will bring into service a range of wheeled, protected vehicles to replace Land Rover Wolf (and other in-service vehicles) in the roles which require protected vehicles. These vehicles will be called the Multi Role Vehicle - Protected (MRV-P).

The Government is undertaking an integrated review of Britain's security, defence and foreign policy which will consider all aspects of our defence and security capabilities. A key strand of the review will explore how we modernise the equipment and improve the capability of our world-class Armed Forces, including that of the British Army, which may require further changes to extant programmes.

■ War Widows: Pensions**Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[23648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing legislative proposals to compensate the estimated 265 war widows that lost their war widow's pension on remarriage; and if he will make a statement on the progress his Department is making on resolving this situation.

Johnny Mercer:

This Government is acutely aware of the unique sacrifice that Service Families make to our country, and appreciates the situation in which those War Widows whom remarried or cohabited prior to 1 April 2015 have been placed in. However, due to the complex legal and financial ramifications surrounding this issue, the Government currently has no plans to reinstate war widows' pensions for those who remarried or cohabited before the 2015 changes took effect. On 3 February 2020, the Defence Secretary made a statement informing this house that we are examining alternative methods in order to mitigate the impact for the estimated 265 war widows whose pension ended as a result of this change - this work is enduring in order that we may explore all appropriate options to mitigate those affected.

■ Warrior Armoured Vehicle: Procurement**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[24279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the (a) original and (b) most recent estimated cost to the public purse of the warrior capability sustainment development programme; and when he expects vehicles produced through that programme to come into service.

Jeremy Quin:

The Warrior Capability Sustainment Project (WCSP) aims to deliver an operational fleet of upgraded Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles, with improved survivability and firepower, until at least 2040.

The original cost of the WCSP demonstration and manufacture phases in 2011 was estimated at £1.319 billion, with the most recent estimated cost being £1.546 billion. Manufacture discussions to confirm a date the vehicles will come into service are ongoing.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Arts: EU Grants and Loans****Daisy Cooper:**[\[24430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the EU's Creative Europe programme on the growth of creative industries in the UK.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Political Declaration stated that the UK is open to participation in certain EU programmes if it is in our interest to do so. While the Government has made the decision not to seek participation in Creative Europe's 2021-27 programme, 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. Domestic alternatives to Creative Europe will be considered in the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Broadband**Kate Griffiths:**[\[22434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the roll-out of superfast broadband in areas where it is unavailable.

Matt Warman:

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is currently working across the UK with local authorities to ensure delivery of superfast broadband is delivered effectively, where it is currently unavailable. As of September 2019, over 5 million premises have been connected due to the superfast rollout alone.

RGC, launched in May 2019, has been allocated £200 million to trial a model to deliver gigabit-capable connectivity to premises in rural and remote locations, combining demand-side and supply-side interventions. The Rural Voucher Scheme is a component of RGC. Rural premises can use vouchers worth up to £3,500 for each Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SMEs), and up to £1,500 per residential premises to support the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections.

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

Broadband: Burton**Kate Griffiths:**[\[22433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of properties in Burton constituency have access to superfast broadband.

Matt Warman:

According to Thinkbroadband, currently, 97% of premises have access to superfast broadband, up from 57% in 2012.

Around 21.8% of premises have full-fibre connections which is above 12% the national average.

Burton, constituency falls under our Superfast Staffordshire project, which has received £9.6m of funding from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) towards the rollout of Superfast broadband.

■ Broadband: Tenants

Chi Onwurah: [\[25098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Telecoms Infrastructure Bill enables tenants to make a request for broadband under the terms of the bill; and what the definition of tenant is.

Matt Warman:

Where a “lessee in occupation” within a multiple dwelling building requests an electronic communications service from an operator, the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill sets out the procedure and circumstances under which an operator can seek to obtain access to common areas in the building (e.g. corridors, basements or stairwells) in order to be able to fulfil the request.

The term “lessee in occupation” refers to a person who occupies a property under the terms of a lease. This could include Assured Shorthold Tenancy or Assured Tenancy agreements.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Third Sector

Robert Halfon: [\[19827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the total amount of funding from the public purse given by his Department to (a) civil society and (b) campaigning bodies in each of the last five years.

Oliver Dowden:

Civil Society forms an essential part of our communities up and down the country. It includes large, national charities, social enterprises, volunteers and small grassroots organisations but what joins them all is the idea of creating social value to help build a better society.

Government funding to civil society is ring-fenced for particular projects or programmes. Grant agreement terms and conditions prohibit grant funding being used for paid for lobbying and political campaigning.

The figures quoted below represent the total amount of expenditure incurred by the Office for Civil Society since it joined DCMS as part of a Machinery of Government transfer. Any information prior to 2015-16 would be held by the Cabinet Office.

2018-19	£178,929,480
2017-18	£228,705,555
2016-17	£253,708,419
2015-16	£169,082,246

■ Digital Technology: Proof of Identity

Chi Onwurah:

[25096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the remit of the Digital Identity Unit is; and what steps he is taking with the Cabinet Secretary to help ensure coherence between that Unit's work and the digital identity policy responsibility of that Department.

Matt Warman:

The Digital Identity Unit brings together officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the the Government Digital Service. It is tasked with developing a trusted digital identity market in the UK.

GDS is responsible for the use of digital identity in government and DCMS is responsible for digital identity for the whole economy.

■ Gambling: Ombudsman

Fiona Bruce:

[24311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to set up a gambling ombudsman independent of betting operators.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government welcomes the National Audit Office's report on Gambling Regulation: Problem Gambling and Protecting Vulnerable People and is considering its recommendations carefully, including the recommendation to review whether arrangements for consumers when things go wrong are working effectively.

The government has also committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ Internet: Bullying

Jim Shannon:

[23475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with social media companies on tackling online bullying.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ministers and officials have regular discussions with social media companies on a range of issues, including online bullying. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

■ Loneliness

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[24258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the ministerial group on loneliness plans to publish a report in 2020.

Oliver Dowden:

In the Tackling Loneliness Strategy, published October 2018, government committed to publishing annual progress reports to provide an update on the implementation of policies set out in the strategy. The first annual report was published in January 2020. This set out progress to date, including action by frontline workers across the public sector to recognise and act on loneliness, the launch of the Let's Talk Loneliness campaign, the commitment to include measures in the Public Health Outcomes Framework so we can understand local rates of loneliness, and the announcement of an additional £2m of grant-funding to help frontline grassroots organisations that bring people together.

The ministerial group on loneliness will consider whether any further reports should be published this year, as part of its ongoing discussions around the government's work on tackling loneliness.

■ Openreach: Regulation**Dan Jarvis:****[25099]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the regulation Openreach by Ofcom.

Matt Warman:

Ofcom is an independent regulator. Its Openreach Monitoring Unit oversees the legal separation of Openreach from BT and produces regular monitoring reports on progress. The Government considers these reports, as part of its ongoing assessment of whether legal separation is delivering better connectivity for consumers and contributing positively to the Government's ambition to deliver national gigabit capable broadband as soon as possible.

■ Social Media: Advertising**Tulip Siddiq:****[23429]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2020 to Question 15107 on Social Media: Advertising, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Advertising Standards Authority on including all injectable cosmetic treatments in its guidance.

Caroline Dineneage:

DCMS has had no recent discussions with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) on including all injectable cosmetic treatments in its guidance.

The ASA seeks to ensure that action is targeted where it is needed, and it has published guidance outlining its evidence-based approach to policy-making:

<https://www.asa.org.uk/resource/evidence-based-policy-making.html>

Noting this, it is already active in the regulation of the advertising of injectable cosmetic treatments, specifically botulinum toxin injections which, as a prescription-only medicine, are prohibited from being advertised to the public by the CAP Code and the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.

The ASA's regulatory system operates independently of government, but where relevant government departments or other regulators identify - independently of the ASA - harm or detriment arising from the advertising of specific products or services, there is opportunity to work with the ASA to address this.

■ Youth Clubs: Closures

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[23403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of youth club closures on the rate of crime committed by young people.

Oliver Dowden:

The Government recognises that there are a range of complex causes of youth crime and that these are often tied to local factors. However, it is the local authorities' role to allocate funding and deliver youth services in line with local need. We are not aware of any conclusive evidence of a direct link between the closure of youth clubs and crimes committed by young people.

This government is committed to young people and levelling up opportunities. We are investing £500 million over five years through the new Youth Investment Fund to build new youth centres, refurbish existing youth facilities, provide mobile facilities for harder to reach areas, and to invest in the youth work profession and frontline services.

Government is also funding up to £7 million this financial year through the Youth Accelerator Fund, expanding existing successful projects that are delivering positive activities for young people, and to address urgent needs in the youth sector. UK Youth is distributing over £1 million of this funding to grassroots youth organisations across the country.

EDUCATION

■ Education: Males

Alex Norris:

[\[24414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a change from a competence-based curriculum to a knowledge-rich curriculum on the education attainment of white working class boys.

Nick Gibb:

In 2014, the Department introduced a more knowledge-rich curriculum with associated reforms to GCSEs to make them more rigorous. These changes were in part driven by a desire to ensure all children, whatever their background, receive a high-quality education.

We have made no specific assessment of the impact of curriculum change alone on attainment of white working-class boys. However, against a background of rising

standards, disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their peers. The attainment gap index shows the gap at the end of primary school has narrowed by 13% since 2011, and by 9% at the end of secondary school. This means better prospects for a secure adult life for disadvantaged pupils. Our reforms, and the focus provided by the pupil premium, have supported this improvement.

■ Erasmus+ Programme

Layla Moran:

[\[24424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the statement that the UK will consider options for participation in elements of Erasmus+ on page 21 of the paper entitled, The future relationship with the EU: the UK's approach to negotiations, CP 211, whether the Government plans to seek (a) partner or (b) programme country status within Erasmus+ after 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

As we set out in the UK's approach to negotiations, we remain open to the UK participating in elements of the Erasmus+ programme, on a time-limited basis, provided the terms are in the UK's interest.

The specific terms under which the UK could participate in the programme are subject to the future negotiations with the EU, which we hope to conclude as soon as possible.

■ Free School Meals

Angela Rayner:

[\[24362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education's oral contribution of 2 March 2020, official report, columns 598-9, if it will remain his policy to provide a free school meal to all infant schoolchildren for the next five years.

Vicky Ford:

This government is committed to ensuring that children are well nourished and develop healthy eating habits that stay with them for the rest of their lives. We are making a significant investment in free school meals for children and have confirmed the funding arrangements for Universal Infant Free School Meals for the current academic year. Arrangements for 2020/21 will be confirmed in due course and funding arrangements after this date will be confirmed as part of the next Spending Review.

■ Literacy: Males

Alex Norris:

[\[24413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the educational attainment of white working class boys of encouraging those boys to develop their (a) reading skills and (b) vocabulary at an early age.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to raising literacy standards – ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects. Improving vocabulary and reading skills are fundamental parts of this.

Our proposed reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage, 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. We have also launched Hungry Little Minds – a three-year campaign to encourage parents to engage in activities that support their child's language and literacy.

To continue improving early reading, in 2018 we launched the £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.

Evidence has shown that phonics is a highly effective component in the development of early reading skills, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The disadvantage gap in the phonics screening check has decreased from 17% in 2012, to 14% in 2019.

■ Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education: Gambling**Mr Richard Holden:****[R] [22439]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what content the PHSE curriculum contains on gambling; and whether that content has been updated to include reference to (a) loot boxes and (b) other new forms of gambling made accessible within games.

Nick Gibb:

The Department wants to equip young people for adult life in Britain and for them to make a positive contribution to society. From September 2020, relationships education will be compulsory for all primary school-aged pupils, relationships and sex education will be compulsory for all secondary school-aged pupils, and health education will be compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools.

The subjects will support all young people in terms of managing risk and making informed decisions, as well as in key aspects such as mental wellbeing and online behaviour. Under the topic of internet safety and harms, the statutory guidance sets out that young people should be taught about the risks related to online gambling, including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them, and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. The statutory guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

Schools have the flexibility to cover content on loot boxes and gambling within computer games, when teaching these subjects. Similarly, such topics can be covered within e-safety teaching as part of the computing curriculum.

■ Postgraduate Education: Fees and Charges

Dr Rupa Huq:

[23524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason universities have autonomy over the procedure for charging application fees at postgraduate level.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities are, historically, autonomous institutions, and they may determine their own procedures, within the law. The Secretary of State has no current legal power to intervene in the charging of application fees. In general, the freedom of higher education providers to determine the criteria for the admission of students and how they are applied is recognised in Section 2, and elsewhere, in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

■ Primary Education: Curriculum

Alex Norris:

[24416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department takes account of attainment outcomes at (a) secondary and (b) further education level the development of the curriculum for key stages 1 and 2.

Nick Gibb:

The Department introduced a more ambitious, knowledge-rich national curriculum in England in 2014, as well as more rigorous GCSEs from 2015, putting us in line with the highest-performing education systems in the world.

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study. In developing the curriculum for each key stage, the knowledge and skills to be taught for each subject were carefully sequenced, to ensure a coherent approach that takes account of prior knowledge. This allows teachers to plan the school curriculum for each subject so their pupils are equipped for successful transition to the next phase of education, whether this is in the move from primary to secondary, or the move from secondary to further education.

In the case of primary English, mathematics and science, the programmes of study were sequenced in more detail on a year-by-year or two-year basis. The GCSE content requirements for each national curriculum subject were also carefully sequenced to build on key stage 3 and align with key stage 4 programmes of study. The independent regulator, Ofqual, has put processes in place to ensure that it is no harder for a student to obtain a grade 7, 4 or 1 in the new GCSEs than it was to achieve a grade A, C or G in the unreformed versions.

■ Pupils: Reading

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[22438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of Ofsted monitoring of schools' policies on reading material provided to pupils for reading at home.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to my hon. Friend and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Schools: Discipline

Alex Norris:

[\[24415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to strengthen the powers of teachers to deal with unruly pupils.

Nick Gibb:

Good behaviour in school is crucial if children are to learn and reach their full potential. As well as delivering excellent teaching, schools should be calm, safe and disciplined environments free from the low-level disruption that prevents pupils from learning.

The Government is committed to backing heads and teachers to enforce discipline, and we have given teachers a range of powers to promote good behaviour and discipline misbehaviour, including how they deal with unruly pupils.

All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy which outlines measures to encourage good behaviour, and the sanctions that will be imposed for misbehaviour. This should be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents. To help schools develop effective strategies, the Department has produced advice for schools which covers what should be included in the behaviour policy. This advice can be viewed here:

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

The Government is also committed to ensuring all teachers are equipped with the skills to tackle both the serious behaviour issues that compromise the safety and wellbeing of pupils and school staff, as well as the low-level disruption that too often gets in the way of effective learning. To help support staff, we are reforming training through the Early Career Framework so that all new teachers will be shown how to effectively manage behaviour in their first two years in the profession.

In February 2020, the Department announced its next steps for implementing the £10 million behaviour hubs programme, which aims to equip senior leaders in schools with the tools to improve their approach to behaviour management through facilitated peer-training, matching them up to exemplary lead schools and multi-academy trusts for bespoke support. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/behaviour-hubs>.

■ Schools: Sutton Coldfield

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[22364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase the number of places in (a) secondary and (b) primary schools in Sutton Coldfield after 2022.

Nick Gibb:

The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places sits with local authorities. The Department provides basic need funding for every place that local authorities forecast is needed. Local authorities can use this funding to provide places in new schools or through expansions of existing schools, and can work with any school in their local area, including academies and free schools.

The Department does not collect information at Parliamentary constituency level, only at local authority and at sub-local authority planning area level. Birmingham has been allocated £294.7 million to provide new school places from 2011-2021, and there are now 30,872 more places than there were in 2010.

The next set of basic need allocations, for places needed in September 2022, will be announced in spring 2020.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Sarah Champion:

[24360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report published in March 2020 by the Menstrual Health Coalition entitled Heavy Menstrual Bleeding – breaking silence and stigma, what steps his Department is taking to ensure effective and comprehensive relationships and sex education in schools in England; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Department wants to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. From September, we are making relationships education compulsory for all primary pupils, relationships and sex education compulsory for all secondary pupils, and health education compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools.

To support schools in their preparations, the Department is investing in a central support package to help all schools to increase the confidence and quality of their teaching practice. We are currently developing a new online service featuring innovative training materials, case studies and support to access resources. This will be available from April 2020 with additional content added through the summer term, covering all of the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance. The implementation guide will also be provided to all schools as part of this service, and training offers will be available for schools that need additional support.

The statutory guidance sets out that as part of health education, primary and secondary pupils should be taught about menstrual wellbeing including key facts about the menstrual cycle. This should include the implications for emotional and physical health. The statutory guidance can be accessed via the following link: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf).

Schools also have the flexibility to design the content of their curriculum in an age appropriate way to support their cohort of pupils. To help schools design their curriculum, we have signposted them to expert advice from Public Health England on reproductive health.

We are also funding access to free period products in state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England.

■ Students: Housing

John Healey: [22359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average housing costs were for full-time students in England in each of the last 10 years.

John Healey: [22360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the extent to which maintenance loans cover the cost of housing for students in England.

John Healey: [24240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of maintenance loans for full-time students in England for the purpose of housing costs.

Michelle Donelan:

The government measures student housing costs periodically but does not collect data annually. The Student Income and Expenditure Survey in 2014/15 reported average housing costs of £4,151 for full-time undergraduates who incurred those costs. The Student Income and Expenditure Survey in 2011/12 reported average housing costs of £3,628 for full-time undergraduates who incurred them.

The student finance system contributes towards undergraduate students' living costs at University, with the most support available for students from the lowest income families. The government increased maximum loans for living costs by 2.8% for the current academic year, 2019/20, to £8,944 for students living away from home and studying outside London with a further 2.9% increase to £9,203 for 2020/21. Higher rates of loan are available for students living away from home and studying in London.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: New Forest****Sir Desmond Swayne:**[\[23570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the accuracy of the stock numbers listed in the Marking Register of Commoner's Stock in the New Forest; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra does not hold this information. Maintaining and verifying stock numbers is a matter for the Verderers of the New Forest.

■ Agriculture: Northern Ireland**Colum Eastwood:**[\[25213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Northern Ireland Executive and (b) representatives of the agricultural industry in Northern Ireland on maintaining current levels of agricultural funding for Northern Ireland at the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The Secretary of State has had recent discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive both bilaterally and via the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which brings together ministers from all parts of the UK to discuss matters of shared interest, including funding. Defra also regularly holds discussions with stakeholders from across the agricultural industry, including representatives from Northern Ireland.

The Government has pledged to guarantee the current annual budget in every year of this Parliament. HM Treasury is ultimately responsible for financial matters across UK Government and lead on discussions on all funding matters with finance ministers in the devolved administrations. Defra will of course continue to work closely with HM Treasury and the devolved administrations on these funding arrangements and to agree funding after 2020.

■ Agriculture: Subsidies**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[22437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the judgement in the judicial review brought by the Commons Committees for Minchinhampton and Rodborough Commons, what steps the Rural Payments Agency has taken to reduce payments in respect of Bollihope Common.

Victoria Prentis:

Bollihope Common have received increased payments as a result of the Judicial Review case brought by the Commons Committees for Minchinhampton and

Rodborough Commons. No grazier has received a reduced payment as a consequence of the case.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[23569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to define the stock registration reference period for delinked agricultural payments that will replace basic payment scheme payments for uncapped headage; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

As part of the transition to our new agriculture policy in England we plan to delink Direct Payments from the land. When delinked payments are introduced, they will entirely replace the current Basic Payment Scheme (and greening and young farmer payment) for all farmers. The earliest we will delink is 2022. Once we have delinked payments, recipients will no longer have to farm in order to receive payments during the agricultural transition.

Eligibility for delinked payments will be based on a reference period. This reference period will be a year, or period of years, before we introduce delinking. We will consult farmers and stakeholders on the detail of how delinking will work before deciding when to introduce it.

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

■ **Animals: Imports**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[23663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of preventing the live import of animals for re-homing in the UK in order to reduce the number of animals destroyed in the UK when no home for them can be found.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government advises against purchasing or acquiring imported dogs for rehoming, as they may carry serious diseases or have behavioural and welfare issues due to poor breeding. The Government's recently launched "Petfished" campaign, which aims to warn people about deceitful sellers including those importing puppies and kittens includes advice on this. Rescue and rehoming centres in this country carry out important work to ensure that unwanted and abandoned animals in the UK are offered the opportunity of a forever home. We advise those seeking to acquire a new dog to first consider adopting from a reputable UK based dog rescue and rehoming centre.

Dogs for rehoming are imported under the Balai Directive, alongside all other commercial movements of dogs. As such a ban would not be appropriate as it may inhibit other commercial movements of animals.

Biodiversity: Midlands**Mr Andrew Mitchell:****[22365]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase biodiversity in the Midlands.

Rebecca Pow:

Across England, the Government is investing in protected sites, restoring wildlife-rich habitats and supporting species recovery.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) provide legal protection for our most important wildlife and natural features in England. There are over 4000 SSSIs in England, covering around 7% of the land area in England. The East and West Midlands are home to some of the finest, with 848 of these sites covering an area of 190,205 hectares.

The Government also provides substantial public funding for managing protected sites and restoring wildlife habitats, spending £2.9 billion on agri-environment schemes in England through our seven-year Rural Development Programme. Schemes are tailored to the specific biodiversity interests in the Midlands through our local targeting statements[1].

The Government supports species recovery through its agri-environment schemes and partnership projects. Natural England is working with conservation organisations and landowners on the Back from the Brink programme, a £7.7 million partnership funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and others to put over 100 priority species on the road to recovery. Two Back from the Brink projects are in the Midlands, both led by Butterfly Conservation. The Limestone's Living Legacies project is restoring a network of limestone grassland sites across the Cotswolds. A second project in Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire, is restoring and managing woodland to aid the local recovery of vulnerable species and the reintroduction of the Chequered Skipper, which last year became the first previously extinct butterfly to have bred successfully in an English woodland for more than 40 years.

Our Bees' Needs Champions Awards has recognised a number of councils and community groups from across the Midlands for their own exemplary work to support pollinators.

Our 25 Year Environment Plan marked a step-change in ambition for the natural environment and we are determined to build on these successes.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities>

Bottles: Recycling**Catherine West:****[24401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made in introducing a public plastic bottle deposit scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Feltham and Heston on 3 March, PQ UIN 20490.

Dogs: Animal Welfare**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[25011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 29 October 2019 to Question 4960 on Dogs: Animal Welfare, when the research on responsible dog ownership her Department has commissioned from Middlesex University will be completed; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

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

Dogs: Electronic Training Aids**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[24232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban (a) hand held, remote electric dog collars, (b) dog bark induced electric collars and (c) electric perimeter fencing for the control of dogs; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to banning the use of hand-held remote controlled electronic dog collars and will lay the necessary legislation for such a ban as soon as Parliamentary time allows. The ban will not include dog bark induced collars or collars that work in connection with perimeter fencing.

Mark Tami:[\[24256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the use of (a) remote controlled hand-held and (b) bark-activated electronic training collars for dogs.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to banning the use of hand-held remote controlled electronic dog collars and will lay the necessary legislation for such a ban as soon as Parliamentary time allows. The ban will not include dog bark induced collars or collars that work in connection with perimeter fencing.

Dogs: Smuggling**Elliot Colburn:**[\[24439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of the recommendations of Dogs Trust's 2018 report entitled, Puppy Smuggling: When will this cruel trade end.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra takes the issue of puppy smuggling seriously. It is an abhorrent trade which causes suffering to puppies and puts the health of pets and people in the UK at risk. We continue to work closely with Dogs Trust to address this issue and understand the evolving trade.

The Government is developing a range of options to strengthen our efforts to tackle puppy smuggling, taking into consideration the recommendations of Dogs Trust and other stakeholders. As part of this work, we have conducted a renewed rabies risk assessment and have commissioned assessments to understand the risks posed by tapeworms, as well as ticks and tick-borne disease. The results of these will be used to inform our future policy options.

Eggs: Imports**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[23673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking ensure processed egg products imported into the UK are from hens kept to welfare standards equivalent to those in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

We have world class animal welfare standards in the UK and we will continue to be a world leader in animal welfare, maintaining and strengthening our standards now that we have left the EU. This will be reflected in our approach to future trading arrangements.

The Government will stand firm in trade negotiations to ensure that future trade deals live up to the values of farmers and consumers across the UK. We will not dilute our high standards of animal welfare, including import requirements.

Fly-tipping**Grahame Morris:**[\[25079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of penalties for fly-tipping in reducing the occurrence of that offence.

Rebecca Pow:

Fly-tipping is an unacceptable blight on local communities and the environment, and in its manifesto, the Government committed to increase the penalties for fly-tipping.

Local authorities have a range of powers available to tackle fly-tipping. These include the power to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) of up to £400 for fly-tipping offences, including to those caught fly-tipping and householders who pass their waste to a fly-tipper. Local authorities also have enhanced powers to search and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. Recent figures showed that there were 76,000 fixed penalty notices issued by Local Authorities in 2018/19, up by 11% from 2017/18.

Local authorities also have the ability to take those accused of fly-tipping to court. If a prosecution is successful, then a fly-tipper can receive a fine of up to £50,000 or 12 months imprisonment if convicted in a Magistrates' Court, or an unlimited fine and up to 5 years imprisonment if convicted in a Crown Court. Local authorities carried out a total of 2,397 prosecutions for fly-tipping offences in England in 2018/19, an increase of 7% on 2017/18. The value of total fines increased by 29% to £1,090,000 compared to 2017/18. The success rates for prosecution actions against fly-tipping are consistently above 95% and have been since records began in 2007/08.

The Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS) published in December 2018 includes a number of commitments to improve sentencing of fly-tippers, including working with the Sentencing Council to increase magistrates' awareness of the prevalence and importance of waste crime; helping local authorities improve the quality of cases; and ensuring the Environmental Offences Definitive guideline is kept up to date and magistrates are effectively trained on it. Defra will continue this work to help to secure tougher penalties in line with our manifesto commitment.

The Environment Bill also delivers commitments set out in the RWS. The Bill amends the Environment Act 1995 to make it easier for enforcing officers to search premises to seize evidence. Additionally, the Bill ensures that FPN levels can be revised as needed to keep them at an adequate level to be an effective and proportionate enforcement tool for local authorities.

■ **Global Resource Initiative Taskforce**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[24283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the timeframe is for the publication of Sir Ian Cheshire's report on global supply chains.

Rebecca Pow:

Sir Ian Cheshire's report on global supply chains is due to be published on 30 March this year.

■ **Historic Buildings: Environment Protection**

James Wild:

[\[23598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to include heritage buildings and structures in the definition of the natural environment to be used in preparing environmental improvement plans.

Rebecca Pow:

Our current 25 Year Environment Plan committed us to "safeguarding and enhancing the beauty of our natural scenery and improving its environmental value while being sensitive to considerations of its heritage". We will continue this approach to improving the natural environment, both identifying the mutually positive impacts on the natural and historic environments our policies can have, as well as identifying potential trade-offs between them.

■ Litter: Tobacco

Steve Double: [\[21396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to include an extended producer responsibility scheme for tobacco litter such as filters in his Department's Waste and Resource Strategy; and if he will hold a public consultation on such a scheme.

Steve Double: [\[21398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of litter-related activities by major tobacco companies to tackle tobacco litter.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has made no specific recent assessment of the UK tobacco industry's contribution to tackling smoking-related litter. We would like to see the tobacco industry delivering on the commitment given by the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association to tackle the litter created by its products and their users. The Government supports ongoing efforts by environmental organisation Keep Britain Tidy to work in partnership with the tobacco industry to devise a voluntary scheme through which the industry can contribute to the clean-up of cigarette related litter, and is watching this space with interest. However, this must be achieved without breaching the UK's international obligations, such as protecting our tobacco control and public health policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Tobacco packaging is covered by the current producer responsibility regulations, which require companies to recycle a proportion of the packaging waste they place on the market. They will also be subject to the forthcoming extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging which will cover the full net costs of managing packaging at its end of life. In our consultation we proposed that producer fees should cover the full cost to local authorities of dealing with littered and fly-tipped packaging waste.

In the Resources and Waste Strategy, we committed to looking into and consulting on EPR for five new waste-streams by 2025, and consulting on two of these by 2022. Waste tobacco filters were not included in this list of priorities but progress on the industry's voluntary approach to litter reduction will be monitored.

The EU's Single-Use Plastics Directive includes measures to implement an EPR scheme for tobacco products with filters, and filters marketed for use in combination with tobacco products, which should cover the costs of awareness raising, data gathering and litter clean-up of these products.

Now that the UK has left the EU, the Government will use this opportunity to refresh and renew our environmental policy. In the Resources and Waste Strategy, we

committed to meeting or exceeding the ambition of the EU Directive, and we will do this in a way that works best for the UK's aspirations in this policy area.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[24224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to (a) reduce the number of sports utility vehicles and (b) incentivise people to switch to more environmentally-friendly vehicles to improve air quality in (a) London and (b) other cities.

Rebecca Pow:

(a) New regulations came into effect on 1 January 2020. These tighten the existing target significantly for the average CO2 emissions a car manufacturer's fleet can emit, down from 130g/km to 95g/km. If manufacturers do not meet this target then they face fines. As this is a fleet average target, manufacturers can make vehicles with emissions above the new 95g/km target providing they balance this out across their fleet with those that are lower than 95g/km. These targets reduce further in 2025 and 2030.

(b) To incentivise people to switch to more environmentally friendly vehicles to improve air quality, the Government is investing nearly £1.5 billion between April 2015 and March 2021 to support the transition to zero emission motoring and has put in place a range of grant schemes. We have put in place various grant funding schemes to assist with the up-front cost of purchasing eligible electric vehicles. Motorists who choose to make the switch to electric also benefit from lower Vehicle Excise Duty and, from April 2020, lower company car tax rates.

On 4 February, the Prime Minister announced that we are consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible.

In London, the Mayor is responsible for air quality in the capital.

■ **Nappies: Biodegradability**

Martyn Day:

[24382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the accuracy of the labelling of disposable nappies in relation to the biodegradability of those nappies.

Rebecca Pow:

In line with our Resources and Waste Strategy, we are considering the best approach to minimise the environmental impact of a range of products, including nappies. We are seeking powers, through the Environment Bill, that will enable us to introduce ecodesign and consumer information requirements, including labelling schemes that provide accurate information to consumers, to drive the market towards more resource efficient products.

We recognise that innovation into biodegradable plastics could help reduce the environmental impact of plastic, if they are disposed of in the right way. Responses to a call for evidence, published last year, will help us consider the development of standards or certification criteria for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics, and to better understand their effects on the environment and our current waste system. The responses are being analysed and a Government response will be published later this year.

■ Nappies: Waste Disposal

Martyn Day: [\[25158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect of a ban on the sale of disposable nappies on the Government's objective of eliminating all avoidable waste by 2050.

Rebecca Pow:

In general, the Government prefers to help people make the right choice, rather than banning items outright, and we have no plans to ban the sale of disposable nappies. We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and consider the most appropriate policy response.

■ Natural England: Public Appointments

Caroline Lucas: [\[25644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the timetable is for the appointment of a permanent chief executive at Natural England.

Victoria Prentis:

The Cabinet office advertisement for the vacancy of Natural England Chief Executive closed on Friday 6 March. Sifting and candidate assessments are expected through March and Natural England plan to complete interviews early April 2020. A decision will be made shortly afterwards and the permanent Chief Executive should be in post as soon as possible, dependent on contractual arrangements.

■ Pâté de Foie Gras: Imports

Henry Smith: [\[23530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the import of foie gras into the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

While allowed under EU law, the Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese using force feeding raises serious welfare concerns. The production of foie gras by force feeding is banned in the UK as it is incompatible with our domestic legislation.

After the transition period, there will be an opportunity to consider whether the UK can adopt a different approach to foie gras imports and sales in the UK.

■ **Pet Travel Scheme**

Elliot Colburn: [24438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to bring forward legislative proposals to strengthen the rules of the Pet Travel Scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the welfare of all animals seriously, and that is why we have committed to cracking down on puppy smuggling. Looking to the future, leaving the EU after the transition period may open up new opportunities for managing our own pet travel arrangements, including ensuring there are robust controls on disease and animal welfare.

■ **Polychlorinated Biphenyl**

Caroline Lucas: [22381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will place in the Library the results of the UK's inventories of open and closed sources of Polychlorinated Biphenyls that formed part of the overall inventories by OSPAR in 2000-2001 and 2005-06.

Rebecca Pow:

The information on inventories of open and closed sources of polychlorinated biphenyls submitted by the UK and other OSPAR countries in 2000-2001 and 2005-2006 to OSPAR can be found on the OSPAR website by following these links:

2000-2001: <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=42229>

2005-2006: <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=41686>

■ **Property Development: Floods**

John Healey: [22356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of planning outcomes for new housing developments were in accordance with Environment Agency flood risk advice, by region, in each of the last 10 years.

John Healey: [22357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of applications for the development of new homes had planning outcomes in accordance with Environment Agency advice on flood risk, by region, in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

As a statutory consultee in development planning, the Environment Agency (EA) advises local planning authorities and developers on how to enable climate resilient development and identify opportunities to protect and enhance the environment.

The EA provides advice on all development proposals in areas that are at (i) medium or high risk of flooding from rivers or the sea (other than minor development) (ii) within 20 metres of a Main River, (iii) within an area with critical drainage problems (other than minor development).

The EA does not make the final decision on local planning approvals and local planning authorities are responsible and accountable for approving proposals for new development in their local areas. In the majority of cases the EA's flood risk advice is taken on board by local planning authorities.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PERFORMANCE INFLUENCING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT INCLUDED NEW HOMES WHERE DECISIONS WERE DECIDED IN LINE WITH OUR ADVICE 2011/12-2018/19 SPLIT BY ENVIRONMENT AGENCY OPERATIONAL HUB.

Year	11-Dec	Dec-13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	Grand Total
North – new homes with recorded planning decisions	3195	10539	13276	12610	8035	7934	6166	4161	65916
North - Number of new homes involved with over-ruled / partially over-ruled decisions	0	649	112	597	3	152	58	11	1582
North - % of new homes determined in line with EA flood	100.0%	93.8%	99.2%	95.3%	100.0%	98.1%	99.1%	99.7%	97.6%

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PERFORMANCE INFLUENCING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT INCLUDED NEW HOMES WHERE DECISIONS WERE DECIDED IN LINE WITH OUR ADVICE 2011/12-2018/19 SPLIT BY ENVIRONMENT AGENCY OPERATIONAL HUB.

risk advice

South East 14912 35251 18237 26961 21498 13872 10924 10812 **152467**
 - new
 homes with
 recorded
 planning
 decisions

South East 11 353 1072 639 26 220 42 89 **2452**
 - Number of
 new homes
 involved
 with over-
 ruled /
 partially
 over-ruled
 decisions

South East 99.9% 99.0% 94.1% 97.6% 99.9% 98.4% 99.6% 99.2% **98.4%**
 - % of new
 homes
 determined
 in line with
 EA flood
 risk advice

West and Central - 28360 20194 27105 37364 36599 20289 17598 8051 **195560**
 new homes
 with
 recorded
 planning
 decisions

West and Central - 113 449 120 102 154 65 58 29 **1090**
 Number of
 new homes
 involved
 with over-
 ruled and

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PERFORMANCE INFLUENCING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT INCLUDED NEW HOMES WHERE DECISIONS WERE DECIDED IN LINE WITH OUR ADVICE 2011/12-2018/19 SPLIT BY ENVIRONMENT AGENCY OPERATIONAL HUB.

partially
over-ruled
decisions

West and Central - % of new homes determined in line with EA flood risk advice	99.6%	97.8%	99.6%	99.7%	99.6%	99.7%	99.7%	99.6%	99.4%
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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INFLUENCING PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT INCLUDED NEW HOMES WHERE DECISIONS WERE DECIDED IN LINE WITH OUR ADVICE 2011/12-2018/19

Year	11-Dec	Dec-13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	Grand Total
Total new homes with recorded planning decisions	46467	65984	58618	76935	66132	42095	34688	23024	413943
Total new homes involved with over-ruled / partially over-ruled decisions	124	1451	1304	1338	183	437	158	129	5124
Average % of new homes determined in line with	99.7%	97.8%	97.8%	98.3%	99.7%	99.0%	99.5%	99.4%	98.8%

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INFLUENCING PLANNING
APPLICATIONS THAT INCLUDED NEW HOMES WHERE DECISIONS WERE DECIDED IN LINE
WITH OUR ADVICE 2011/12-2018/19**

**EA flood
risk advice**

■ **River Severn**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[25048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the presentation from the Shropshire Environment Agency and Shropshire Council during his recent visit to Shrewsbury, what steps he is taking to (a) support and (b) provide funding for the proposals on the management of the River Severn set out in that presentation.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State was briefed on the River Severn Partnership by the Environment Agency (EA) during his recent visit to Shrewsbury where he saw the impact of prolonged floods and spoke with responders and affected businesses. The Government commends the great progress made in establishing a strategic coalition of partners from local government, business and the EA. The Government supports the ambitious plan to develop a strategy for water resources, flood risk and sustainable growth to ensure the climate resilience and future prosperity of the River Severn catchment. I would be pleased to speak further with the hon. Member and the EA as the initiative progresses.

■ **Thames Flood Barrier**

Jackie Doyle-Price:

[24336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many times the Thames flood barrier has been closed in each month since January 2017.

Rebecca Pow:

There have been 12 Thames Barrier Flood Defence Closures since January 2017. The table below shows how these have fallen over the following months.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
January	2	3			5
February				2	2
March			1		1
April					

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
May					
June					
July					
August					
September			1		1
October	1		1		2
November					
December		1			1

There have been 46 Thames Barrier Closures in total since January 2017. This includes monthly test closures and flood defence closures. A table showing the monthly breakdown is below:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
January	3	3	1	1	8
February	1	1	1	2	5
March	1	1	2		4
April	1	1	1		3
May	1	1	1		3
June	1	1	1		3
July	1	1	1		3
August	1	1	1		3
September	1	1	1		3
October	2	1	2		5
November	1	1	1		3
December	1	1	1		3

■ Trees

Paul Maynard:

[21212]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of trees are recognised as (a) ancient and (b) veteran in England and Wales.

Rebecca Pow:

Forestry is a devolved matter and so this answer is in relation to England only.

The Government does not have a statutory duty to collate numbers of Ancient and Veteran Trees. The Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) currently lists 160,000 ancient, veteran and notable trees across the UK. The Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland, Ancient and Veteran Trees, available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>, directs users to the Woodland Trust's ATI which is collated by volunteers around the country at <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>.

The Government updated the National Planning Policy Framework in 2019 to improve protection of ancient and veteran trees, noting that these are irreplaceable habitat and these should only be lost to development with wholly exceptional reasons and with a suitable compensation strategy in place. For more information you can visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2>.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Ahmed Mansoor and Nabeel Rajab

Emily Thornberry:

[23640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterparts in (a) Bahrain and (b) the United Arab Emirates on the upholding of jail sentences to human rights activists (a) Nabeel Rajab and (b) Ahmed Mansoor in those respective countries.

James Cleverly:

We continue to raise the case of Mr Rajab at senior levels as part of the UK's ongoing open dialogue with Bahrain. We continue to urge the Government of Bahrain to protect freedom of expression for all its citizens in line with its international commitments.

On Mr Mansoor, officials have raised the case with senior Emirati officials in the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. We urge all countries to comply with their human rights obligations.

■ Armed Conflict: Civilians**Afzal Khan:** [\[23500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 3611, when he will publish the outcome of his Department's review of the Government's approach to Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

Nigel Adams:

The Government is finalising work on the review of its approach to the Protection of Civilians (PoC) in Armed Conflict. We were unable to meet the previously stated publication date as we were required to adhere to the rules governing the publication of documentation in the run up to the December 2019 General Election. We aim to publish a document outlining the Government's approach to the PoC soon.

■ Bahrain: Huddersfield University**Chris Law:** [\[25129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 February 2020 to Question HL1537, whether his Department was consulted by the University of Huddersfield on the establishment of an MSc in Security Science reserved for students at Bahrain's Royal Academy of Policing.

James Cleverly:

There have not been any discussions with the University of Huddersfield about its provision of an MSc in Security Science exclusively to students at the Royal Academy of Policing.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Death**Alun Cairns:** [\[24337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British nationals aged between 13 and 25 died in (a) Spain and (b) the rest of the world in each of the last five years.

Nigel Adams:

The FCO does not hold a complete record of information requested as it is not obligatory for states to inform us of the deaths of British Nationals in their territory, nor do we record the details of British nationals overseas who do not require assistance.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Detainees**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[18832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many cases of alleged torture or mistreatment of detained British nationals his Department identified in (a) Iran and (b) throughout the world in 2019.

Nigel Adams:

The total number of reported cases of British nationals alleging torture or mistreatment overseas to consular staff between January and December 2019 will be published in the FCO's 2019 Human Rights and Democracy Report. We follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of each case where we have the individual's consent. We do not release figures by country as this would risk identifying individuals who do not wish to have their allegations raised."

Cameroon: Detainees**Emily Thornberry:**[\[21921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representation he has made to his Cameroonian counterpart on the continued detention of (a) Maurice Kamto and (b) 200 supporters of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement.

James Duddridge:

The British Government remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. We continue to shine a spotlight on the crisis and raise our concerns at the highest levels, including with the Government of Cameroon. We welcomed the convening of the National Dialogue in October 2019 by the Government of Cameroon, and the release of opposition leader Maurice Kamto among more than three hundred detainees arrested in connection with the crisis. Due process must be followed for all those who remain in detention.

Emily Thornberry:[\[21922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Cameroonian counterpart on the arrest and detention of (a) Théodore Tchopa and (b) David Eyengue Nzima following those journalists' reporting of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement-led protests in Douala in January 2020.

James Duddridge:

We were deeply concerned by the arrest and detention of journalists Théodore Tchopa and David Eyengue Nzima following their reporting of protests in Douala on 28 January 2019. We welcomed their release on 1 February 2019. We continue to press the Government of Cameroon to ensure that human rights are respected. Due process should be followed at all times, and freedom of political expression must be respected. The British Government is fully committed to promoting media freedom and the protection of journalists. We believe that media freedom is vital to functioning democracies and that journalists must be able to investigate and report without undue interference.

■ Cameroon: Politics and Government

Harriett Baldwin:

[23508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) political, (b) humanitarian and (c) security situations in the Anglophone region of Cameroon; and what steps he is taking with the Government of Cameroon to resolve those situations.

James Duddridge:

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

We welcomed the passing of legislation concerning bilingualism and special status for the North-West and South-West regions in December 2019. This was a welcome initial step forward. Commitments and legislation now need to be implemented in a timely manner to support genuine decentralisation of power and to tackle the root causes of the conflict. We continue to shine a spotlight on the crisis and raise our concerns at the highest levels, including with the Government of Cameroon, in multinational fora and with international partners. At the UN Security Council on 12 February, the UK highlighted the significant impact of the crisis on children. At the UN Human Rights Council on 27 February, the UK raised concerns about the protection of civilians in Cameroon.

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

■ Central African Republic: Peacekeeping Operations

Emily Thornberry:

[21182]

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 the Central African Republic.

James Duddridge:

The UK is aware of the reports of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in the Central African Republic and the UN has published associated data on its website <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-data-introduction>.

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.

■ **China: Uighurs**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[21180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the treatment of Uighur Muslims in China; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

We regularly raise our concerns about Xinjiang at the UN, and directly with Chinese officials. Most recently, on 5 March the Minister for Asia raised his concerns about Xinjiang with Liu Xiaoming, the Chinese Ambassador to the UK. On 25 February at the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, Lord Ahmad expressed concern about Xinjiang during the UK's opening address, calling on China to allow the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights unfettered access to the region. The UK Ambassador to China also raised our concerns about the region with Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang on 24 December 2019.

■ **Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[23642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the next scheduled meeting is of the Commonwealth Ministerial Advisory Group; and which country's or countries' conduct will be the subject of that meeting.

Nigel Adams:

The next meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) is due to take place in March. At that meeting, as is usual practice, the Commonwealth Secretary-General will be expected to provide an update on developments in a number of Commonwealth member states. CMAG provides a space for sensitive discussions, which in turn facilitate discreet engagement. On that principle, we would not be able to confirm the content of the agenda, which is set by the Chair (currently Kenya) in consultation with the Secretary-General.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Olivia Blake:

[\[24461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps is he taking to ensure that health organisations across the world are providing consistent advice and taking consistent action in relation to covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

The UK continues to support global efforts to combat the outbreak of COVID-19. We have world leading medical expertise, an unparalleled diplomatic network and experience working with countries to overcome public health emergencies. Our overseas missions have prioritised efforts to engage foreign governments on COVID-19 response. The UK is also working closely with our G7 partners, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the EU and other international partners.

The British Government is providing £5m to WHO (~10% of the current appeal) to help counter the spread in developing countries and is deploying UK medical experts to priority countries. Through the WHO, the UK is funding efforts to reduce the risk of the spread of the disease by supporting developing countries most at risk of coronavirus. This includes training rapid response teams and medical staff to identify and respond to symptoms, raising awareness in developing countries of how to avoid coronavirus and predicting the spread of the virus to better target future support.

■ Delhi: Violence

Paul Bristow:

[\[23665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with (a) his Indian counterpart Government and (b) the Indian High Commission on the recent anti-Muslim violence in Delhi; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India are closely monitoring violence and protests in Delhi and in other regions.

We engage India on the full range of human rights matters, and we raise our concerns with the Government of India where we have them. Most recently, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, discussed the impact of recent judicial and legislative measures on minorities with a senior member of India's Ministry of External Affairs on 25 February.

■ EU Nationals: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[23660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he is making to his EU member state counterparts to ensure that people originating from Northern Ireland who identify as Irish and retain Irish Citizenship and

therefor EU citizenship are not removed from electoral register on the basis that they are only considered as British citizens under the 1981 Nationality Act.

Wendy Morton:

Under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the People of Northern Ireland have the right to identify as British, Irish or both; and the right to hold both British and Irish citizenship. Thus, and in line with UK and Irish citizenship laws, the People of Northern Ireland may be solely British citizens, solely Irish citizens, or dual British-Irish citizens. Those people of Northern Ireland who are exercising their free movement rights, as Irish (including dual British-Irish) citizens, to reside in a European Union Member State will continue to be subject to the same rules as other EU citizens residing in that Member State, including with regard to voting rights. People of Northern Ireland, regardless of their citizenship, may also be exercising their free movement rights as family members of EU citizens in a European Union Member State and accordingly will continue to be subject to relevant rules with regard to voting rights. Those who are solely British citizens, and who are not exercising free movement rights as family members of EU citizens, will be subject to the rules applicable to other British citizens in that Member State, including with regard to voting rights.

The right of British citizens to vote and stand in local elections depends on the electoral rules of the Member State in which they live. The UK pushed hard in Withdrawal Agreement negotiations to include the right to vote and stand in local elections, but the EU Commission argued that voting rights were a Member State competence. UK Ministers wrote to all EU Member States in December 2018 to propose bilateral agreements on local voting rights, and we have now signed agreements with Spain, Portugal and Luxembourg. Some Member States have constitutional provisions that prevent third-country nationals from voting in local elections.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Interserve**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[21368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help resolve the dispute between the members of PCS union employed by Interserve and his Department; and if he will meet those union members.

Nigel Adams:

The dispute remains one between Interserve, as employer, and employees with representation from the PCS union.

■ **Greece: Immigration Controls**

Colum Eastwood:

[\[25211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Greece on (a) that Government's methods of

monitoring and patrolling its borders and (b) the effect of those methods on the humanitarian programme to assist refugees.

Wendy Morton:

We are concerned by the situation on the Greek border and UK officials remain in close contact with the Greek Government. The British Government remains committed to supporting Greek efforts to manage migration effectively. We are working both bilaterally and with our international partners to this end.

■ **Greece: Refugees**

Tim Farron:

[\[24303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps is he taking with his international counterparts to respond to the increase in refugees leaving Turkey seeking to enter Greece since Turkey opened its borders on 28 February 2020.

Wendy Morton:

We are concerned by the situation on the Greek border and remain in close contact with the Greek government. The British Government remains committed to supporting Greek efforts to manage migration effectively. We are working both bilaterally and with our international partners to this end. The Foreign Secretary raised this issue with his Turkish counterpart in Ankara on 3 March, and the UK Chargé d'Affaires also discussed it with the Greek Foreign Minister on 3 March. The UK is supporting Turkey by providing humanitarian assistance in Syria, and Greece by providing interpreters as well as a cutter to rescue migrants in the Aegean.

■ **Greek Islands: Humanitarian Aid**

Colum Eastwood:

[\[25210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government is providing assistance to (a) UK-based NGOs and (b) UK citizens undertaking humanitarian work on the Greek island of Lesbos.

Wendy Morton:

The British Government remains committed to supporting Greece's efforts to manage migration effectively and is working with the Greek Government to this end. Current UK support continues to be through provision of interpreters in the migrant camps, £500,000 funding for humanitarian supplies for the hotspot islands, as well as search and rescue operations in the Aegean.

■ **Greek Islands: Migrant Camps**

Dan Carden:

[\[23492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made in the last three months to his counterpart in Greece on its policy to contain migrants on Greek islands in the Aegean sea.

Wendy Morton:

The UK and Greece enjoy a long-standing friendship. The UK is concerned about the condition of migrant camps on the Greek islands. Following a significant increase in arrivals during 2019, camps on the "hotspot" Greek islands have become severely overcrowded, resulting in poor conditions and inadequate accommodation, sanitation and healthcare.

The British Government remains committed to supporting Greece's efforts to manage migration and is working with the Greek Government to this end. We discuss our concerns with Greek ministers, as well as with senior officials, most recently HMA Athens spoke to the Minister for Migration and Asylum on 7 February and the UK Chargé d'Affaires with the Foreign Minister on 3 March.

■ Greek Islands: Refugees**Colum Eastwood:**[\[25209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assistance the UK Government is providing to the Greek Government in moving refugees from the Greek Islands to a place of safety.

Wendy Morton:

The British Government remains committed to supporting the Greek Government's efforts to manage migration effectively. Current UK support includes provision of both interpreters in the migrant camps and search and rescue operations in the Aegean.

■ Indigenous Peoples**Emily Thornberry:**[\[21179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that rights of indigenous peoples are embedded into the proposed International Treaty on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations.

Nigel Adams:

The British Government is committed to our work to improve human rights practices of businesses through the promotion of the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights - the authoritative global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse human rights impacts of business. We continue to promote the UNGPs, including in respect of the specific challenges faced by indigenous communities, in practical ways.

■ Mukhtar Dzhakishev**Emily Thornberry:**[\[23641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Kazakhstani counterpart on the continued detention of Mukhtar Dzahakishev.

Wendy Morton:

We understand that Mr Dzhakishev is expected to be released from prison imminently. We will continue to monitor his case. The UK is a strong supporter of human rights in Kazakhstan. We will continue to work alongside partners in raising the detention of political prisoners such as Mr Dzhakishev, as we did most recently as part of the December 2018 EU-Kazakhstan human rights dialogue.

■ Pakistan: Crimes against Humanity**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[22045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with his Pakistani counterpart on mass graves in (a) Khuzdar, (b) Turbat and (c) Dera Bugti.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of reports of mass graves in Khuzdar, Turbat and Dera Bugti in Balochistan. These would be of deep concern to the British Government. The UK is clear that all States have the responsibility to meet human rights obligations for all including the right to life. The British Government regularly raises its concerns about human rights at the highest levels of the Government of Pakistan. The British Government regularly raises concerns with the Pakistan Government at a senior level on the vital need to respect human rights and the rule of law. Most recently, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, raised concerns about human rights with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister in February 2020.

■ Pakistan: Earthquakes**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[22035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether humanitarian aid provided to Pakistan following the Balochistan earthquakes in 2013 reached that region.

Nigel Adams:

In response to the September 2013 earthquake in Balochistan, the UK provided relief and recovery interventions worth £2.5m. Monitoring of this assistance was carried out by third parties as most areas in Balochistan are inaccessible for British Government staff for security reasons. Regular field-based evidence was gathered on our support, including independent monitoring. This monitoring confirmed the distribution of around 10,000 emergency shelter roofing kits (8,666 male-headed and 1,334 female-headed households), 40,000 blankets, 10,000 ceramic filters, 32,000 sleeping mats and 10,000 solar lights.

The Department for International Development (DFID) has a zero-tolerance policy to fraud, bribery and corruption. This is regularly communicated to organisations we fund and work with, including Government counterparts in Pakistan. Alongside this

policy, we have third party validation of results achieved using DFID funds in Pakistan.

The National Disaster Consortium (NDC), led by the UN International Organisation for Migration Pakistan under our Multi Year Humanitarian Programme, provides rapid responses to any humanitarian emergency throughout Pakistan. In Balochistan, we are currently providing drought and snow emergency response through the NDC.

■ **Pakistan: Freedom of Circulation**

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of restrictions of movement for Baloch people living in Pakistan on human rights in that region.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of concerning reports of restrictions on movement in Balochistan. The British Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their ethnicity or beliefs. We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterpart on the freedom of movement of Baloch people in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of concerning reports of restrictions on movement in Balochistan. The British Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their ethnicity or beliefs. We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the freedom of movement for Baloch people in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of concerning reports of restrictions on movement in Balochistan. The British Government strongly condemns the persecution of all minorities, including the targeting of people based on their ethnicity or beliefs. We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, as laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

■ Pakistan: Freedom of Expression

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[22040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions has he had with his Pakistani counterpart on ensuring the maintenance of freedom of speech in Balochistan.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned by restrictions on the freedom of expression in Pakistan. We regularly remind the Government of Pakistan of its human rights obligations, including on the freedom of expression. The freedom to hold and express views without censorship, intimidation or unnecessary restriction is a cornerstone of democracy. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, raised our concerns about human rights in a letter to Pakistan's Human Rights Minister in February 2020.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[22041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help protect freedom of speech in the Balochistan region of Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned by restrictions on the freedom of expression in Pakistan. We regularly remind the Government of Pakistan of its human rights obligations, including on the freedom of expression. The freedom to hold and express views without censorship, intimidation or unnecessary restriction is a cornerstone of democracy. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, raised our concerns about human rights in a letter to Pakistan's Human Rights Minister in February 2020.

■ Pakistan: Human Rights

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[22042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of allegations that British made arms have been used in human rights abuses in Balochistan.

Nigel Adams:

All export licences are strictly assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Risks around human rights abuses are a key part of our assessment. We do not issue export licences where we assess there is a clear risk that the items might be used for internal repression. The Government keeps defence exports under careful and continual review and can suspend or revoke licences when necessary.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that UK arms exports are not used in human rights violations in Balochistan.

Nigel Adams:

All export licences are strictly assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Risks around human rights abuses are a key part of our assessment. We do not issue export licences where we assess there is a clear risk that the items might be used for internal repression. The Government keeps defence exports under careful and continual review and can suspend or revoke licences when necessary.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterpart on reports of human rights abuses using British made arms in the region of Balochistan.

Nigel Adams:

All export licences are strictly assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Risks around human rights abuses are a key part of our assessment. We do not issue export licences where we assess there is a clear risk that the items might be used for internal repression. The Government keeps defence exports under careful and continual review and can suspend or revoke licences when necessary.

■ **Pakistan: Non-governmental Organisations**

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterpart on the restrictions alleged to have been placed by that country on the activities of NGOs and aid organisations in the Balochistan region.

Nigel Adams:

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are at the forefront of vital humanitarian and development work. They deliver relief to some of the poorest in Pakistan and are important partners. We continue to monitor the ability for NGOs and aid organisations to operate. We have expressed our concern to the Government of Pakistan and continue to urge a clear and transparent process to ensure International NGOs can operate effectively in Pakistan or understand the reasons for their eviction.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[22034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports that the Pakistani Government is restricting access to (a) NGOs and (b) humanitarian organisations in the Balochistan region.

Nigel Adams:

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are at the forefront of vital humanitarian and development work. They deliver relief to some of the poorest in Pakistan and are important partners. We continue to monitor the ability for NGOs and aid organisations to operate. We have expressed our concern to the Government of Pakistan and continue to urge a clear and transparent process to ensure International NGOs can operate effectively in Pakistan or understand the reasons for their eviction.

■ **Palestinians: Agricultural Products**

Jo Stevens: [\[25142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Israeli Government's ban on the export of some types of Palestinian agricultural produce to the Kingdom of Jordan on the Israel-Palestine peace process.

Jo Stevens: [\[25143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help end the dispute between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on trade of agricultural products.

James Cleverly:

The UK is concerned about the impact of recent Israeli trade restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are committed to supporting Palestinian economic development. The UK Government strongly supports the principle of free trade. Businesses should be free to import Palestinian products without barriers. Her Majesty's Ambassador to Israel has raised this issue with the Government of Israel, most recently on 12 February. We welcome the agreement reached by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, on 20 February, to lift their respective trade restrictions. We urge both sides to ensure the continued implementation of this agreement.

■ **Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[25009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to maintain restrictions on arms sales to Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

The Government's position remains that, until it retakes licensing decisions in line with the 20 June 2019 judgment of the Court of Appeal, it will not issue any new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners for possible use in the conflict in Yemen.

■ Sri Lanka: War Crimes

Afzal Khan:

[\[21352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his US counterpart on the introduction of travel restrictions on high-level Sri Lankan Government officials accused of war crimes.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 2 March 2020]: We note the decision of the US authorities to introduce travel restrictions on the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army. We have not made formal representation to the US Government on this matter. UK and US officials are in regular contact on human rights and accountability issues in Sri Lanka.

■ Sudan: Economic Situation

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[21983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he is having with the Secretary of State for International Development on providing support for the reform of the Sudanese economy to reduce the number of Sudanese people living in extreme poverty.

James Duddridge:

Officials from the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office work together closely to assist the Government of Sudan as it addresses the large economic and political challenges the country faces in delivering the transition to democracy. HMG will continue to work closely with both the Sudanese government and international partners to provide support for the economic reforms, including mechanisms to mitigate the effects such reforms will have on the poorest in Sudan. In addition, through our humanitarian assistance the UK is committed to assisting all people in Sudan, and remains one of the largest bilateral humanitarian donors in the country.

■ Sudan: Politics and Government

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[21981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support Sudan's transition to a democratically-elected civilian-led Government.

James Duddridge:

The UK welcomes the Constitutional Declaration signed on 17 August 2019 which sets out the plan for Sudan's transition to civilian government with elections in 2021. The fragile political, economic and security situation makes this a difficult task; the UK is committed to supporting Sudan through this transition and beyond. To date UK support has included providing technical advice to the government to address immediate needs, particularly around economic reform and strategic communications. Further to our extensive humanitarian assistance to Sudan, the UK has taken a leading role in coordinating with international partners and organisations to shape a package of assistance to support the civilian-led government as it

implements economic and political reforms. In addition, our longstanding engagement with the Sudanese government and civil society to strengthen human rights, including media freedoms, remains a key part of our work to foster Sudan's democratic transition ahead of elections.

■ Sudan: Terrorism

Harriett Baldwin: [\[21982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to help the Sudanese Government seek its removal from the United States' list of state sponsors of terrorism.

James Duddridge:

Sudan's removal from the U.S. State Sponsor of Terrorism List, a bilateral matter between the US and Sudan, is an important step in opening the way to international financial institution engagement on economic reform and debt relief. The UK supports Sudan's transition, and its demonstration of meaningful political reform as it moves through the de-listing process.

■ Taliban: Peace Negotiations

Jonathan Edwards: [\[25069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on peace negotiations with the Taliban.

Nigel Adams:

It is our longstanding position that a political solution to the conflict is the only way to achieve lasting stability in Afghanistan and the wider region. The UK welcomes both the agreement between the US and the Taliban, and the Joint Declaration between the United States and the Afghan Government. It is vital that the next step is a credible and inclusive peace process. The UK remains in close contact with the US about the situation in Afghanistan, peace efforts and the continuing NATO commitment to the Afghan National Security Forces.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Cancer: Health Services

Grahame Morris: [\[24312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to implement a cancer workforce plan to ensure an adequately skilled and sustainable workforce.

Grahame Morris: [\[24313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the background briefing to the Queen's Speech 2019, how many of the 50,000 additional nurses will be cancer nurse specialists.

Jo Churchill:

The final NHS People Plan is due to be released in 2020 and will build upon the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan, published in 2017, including to increase the number of Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) and develop common and consistent competencies for this role with a clear route into training. The plan will take targeted action to ensure the supply of National Health Service staff who play vital role in increasing early diagnosis of cancer, including: specialist cancer nurses, histopathologists, diagnostic radiographers, screening endoscopists and cancer support workers.

No individual target for specific branches or specialties of the nursing profession has been set within the commitment to 50,000 more nurses in the NHS by 2025.

Measures to increase the number of CNS will be considered as part of workforce planning to deliver the NHS People Plan.

■ Cancer: Nurses**Grahame Morris:**[\[25078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the size of the cancer nursing workforce.

Jo Churchill:

The final NHS People Plan is due to be released in 2020 and will build upon the progress made through the Cancer Workforce Plan (published in 2017), including to increase the number of Clinical Nurse Specialists and develop common and consistent competencies for this role with a clear route into training. The plan will take targeted action to ensure the supply of National Health Service staff who play a vital role in delivering cancer care including specialist cancer nurses.

■ Coronavirus**Lisa Nandy:**[\[23458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) public health workers and (b) people employed to clean buildings have adequate (i) equipment, (i) resources and (iii) health protection to respond to an outbreak of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 March 2020]: Guidance for public health workers and primary responders was published by Public Health England (PHE) on 25 February 2020. It sets out how to identify potential cases as soon as possible, how to prevent potential transmission of infection to other patients and staff and how to isolate the patient.

The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care/wn-cov-interim-guidance-for-primary-care#environmental-cleaning-following-a-possible-case>

Guidance for employers and businesses, including cleaning offices and public spaces where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID 19 was published by PHE on 25 February 2020.

The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>

The National Health Service remains prepared to respond to high consequence infectious diseases, including the response to the current outbreak of COVID-19. The NHS has tried and tested procedures to response to infectious disease outbreaks many of which are used each year for seasonal flu. The NHS will continue to follow the public health advice from Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer to ensure the protection of NHS staff, patients and the public. It is the Government's priority that the NHS has appropriate equipment, resources and health protection to respond to COVID-19 and we are working closely with the NHS England and the devolved administrations to ensure this.

Olivia Blake:

[24457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the UK has withdrawn from the EU's Early Warning and Response System; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK's withdrawal from that system on efforts to coordinate a response to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom uses a range of international information-sharing systems to monitor global health threats including the European Union's Early Warning and Response System (EWRS). The UK has continued access to EWRS during the transition period, and we continue to share key updates with our European counterparts via this system, including on the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The UK remains committed to working with countries and partners from across the world to protect our citizens from new and emerging cross-border threats to health. As set out in the UK's approach to the EU negotiations, we are open to exploring cooperation between the UK and EU on matters of health security.

Hilary Benn:

[25021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether having the pneumococcal vaccine has potential benefits for patients with covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Based on our knowledge of influenza, an epidemic of viral pneumonia caused by COVID-19 infection, could potentially result in an increased risk of invasive pneumococcal disease above and beyond the normal seasonal variation. The United Kingdom pneumococcal conjugate programme in children provides strong 'herd immunity', which protects the whole population, including the elderly, against the 13 types contained in the vaccine. Cases due to other types of pneumococcus may also be covered by the vaccine which is offered as part of a national programme to those

in clinical risk groups and to all over 65s. This vaccine covers 23 types of pneumococcus and will provide modest protection against severe forms of infection to those vaccinated. Both immunisation programmes may therefore help to mitigate any potential risk of an increase in pneumococcal infection associated with any COVID-19 epidemic.

Hilary Benn:

[25022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether family members caring at home for people (a) with covid-19 and (b) in self-isolation to protect others from covid-19 should wear face masks.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England have published guidance for patients in self-isolation at home and family members who share their accommodation at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-for-people-who-live-in-the-same-accommodation-as-the-patient>

Face masks are not normally recommended as they do not provide protection from respiratory viruses such as COVID-19. They are only recommended to be worn by infected persons when advised by a healthcare worker in order to reduce the risk of transmitting infection to others.

However, if for any reason the patient is unable to wear a face mask, then family members sharing their accommodation may do so, if advised, whilst in the same room as the patient.

■ **Coronavirus: Merseyside**

Ms Angela Eagle:

[24250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequate provision of intensive care beds in the event of an outbreak of covid-19 in (a) Merseyside, (b) Wirral and (c) Wallasey.

Jo Churchill:

It is the Government's priority that the National Health Service has appropriate equipment to respond to COVID-19, this includes the provision of intensive care beds. The Department working closely with NHS England and the devolved administrations to ensure this. The Government is monitoring the situation closely and are creating plans with the NHS for an increase in the cases of COVID-19.

The NHS remains prepared to respond to high consequence infectious diseases, including the response to the current outbreak of Covid-19. The NHS has tried and tested procedures to respond to infectious disease outbreaks many of which are used each year for seasonal flu.

■ Coronavirus: Older People

Catherine West:

[24402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prepare for the care of elderly people at home if they contract covid-19; and whether additional protection will be supplied to carers during the outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Current evidence suggests that the risk from coronavirus is greater for older people and people with existing health conditions, such as lung and heart conditions. We would therefore encourage those caring for such people to ensure they are following the stringent hygiene measures recommended by the National Health Service. Anyone with symptoms should avoid seeing older relatives or people with health conditions to avoid passing it on to them. We also advise carers to put in place a plan for all those they look after in case they are unable to attend them, taking into account their medication and care needs. Measures might include helping older relatives and neighbours to have someone available to go shopping for them or arranging for online delivery if needed.

Anyone concerned about COVID-19 can call NHS 111 for advice. This includes carers who suspect those they care for may have been in contact with COVID-19.

■ Coronavirus: Schools

Olivia Blake:

[24459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide schools where staff and pupils have been advised to wash their hands five times a day as a result of covid-19 with the appropriate sanitation products to do so.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has provided information and advice specifically for educational settings. Under the guidance for preventing spread of infection the following information has been provided on hand washing. This information is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Sanitation products would be up to individual schools to provide.

■ Coronavirus: Yorkshire

Olivia Blake:

[24458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many specialist hospital beds for the treatment of people with the most severe cases of covid-19 are available in Yorkshire.

Jo Churchill:

It is the Government's priority that the National Health Service has appropriate equipment to respond to COVID-19, this includes the provision of intensive care

beds. The Department is working closely with NHS England and the devolved administrations to ensure this. The Government is monitoring the situation closely and are creating plans with the NHS for an increase in the cases of COVID-19.

The NHS remains prepared to respond to high consequence infectious diseases, including a response to the current outbreak of COVID-19. The NHS has tried and tested procedures to response to infectious disease outbreaks many of which are used each year for seasonal flu.

■ **Dementia: Social Services**

Helen Hayes:

[25164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department plans to allocate from the public purse to the provision of social care services for people with dementia in each of the next five years.

Helen Whately:

Local authorities are best placed to understand and plan for the care needs of their populations, and to allocate resources for social care services.

To assist them, we are 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 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.

■ **Disease Control: Protective Clothing**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[24230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of asking people to wear gloves in order to stop the spreading of viruses.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is considering all options to tackle COVID-19 and continues to be guided by the science. Public Health England's (PHE) advice on how to minimise the spread of viruses focuses on hand hygiene and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' advice for coughs and sneezes. Recent campaign materials are available to view at the following link:

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

PHE has issued the following guidance on COVID-19: infection prevention and control guidance. This recommends the use of Personal Protective Equipment, including disposable gloves by healthcare professionals or facilities that may be involved in the investigation or management and care of possible COVID-19 patients. The guidance can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-wn-cov-infection-prevention-and-control-guidance#PPE>

■ **Drugs: Advertising**

Tulip Siddiq: [23431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many meetings his Department has had with the Advertising Standards Authority on the advertising of non-prescription medicines such as dermal fillers in the last 12 months.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department has not had any meetings with the Advertising Standards Authority on the advertising of non-prescription medicines such as dermal fillers in the last 12 months.

The Department has been working with industry stakeholders to explore the regulation of the cosmetic interventions industry. This has included engagement with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in relation to its review of online advertising, launched in February 2019.

The Government is committed to improving the safety of cosmetic procedures through better training for practitioners and clear information so that people can make informed decisions about their care.

■ **General Practitioners: North East**

Bridget Phillipson: [24323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many full-time equivalent GP clinical staff there were in (a) Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group area and (b) the North East in 2018-2019.

Jo Churchill:

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors, direct patient care practitioners and nurses in general practice who worked in general practices in England, the North East and Yorkshire and NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on 31 December 2018 and on 31 December 2019 are presented in the following table.

Due to a change in the regions, there is no comparable 'North East' region between September 2018 and 2019.

		FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT		
		ALL REGULAR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS (GPs) (EXCLUDES LOCUMS)	ALL NURSES	ALL DIRECT PATIENT CARE
England	December 2018	34,510	16,348	12,858
	December 2019	34,708	16,819	14,050
North East and Yorkshire	December 2018	5,122	3,154	2,454
	December 2019	-	-	-
Sunderland CCG	December 2018	151	96	56
	December 2019	144	100	58

Source: NHS Digital

Notes:

1. Data as of 31 December.
2. Figures shown do not include general practitioners, direct patient care staff and nurses working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings.
3. Each period, figures contain estimates, for practices that did not provide fully valid General Medical Practice general practitioner/nurse/direct patient care/admin/non-clinical staff records.
4. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. 1 would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that they worked half time. In Registrars' contracts 1 FTE = 40 hours. To ensure consistency, these FTEs have been converted to the standard wMDS measure of 1 FTE = 37.5 hours in the table.

■ Health Professions: Training

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[24325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to abolish tuition fees for (a) student nurses, (b) midwives and (c) allied health professionals.

Helen Whately:

The Government has no plans to abolish tuition fees for student nurses, midwives or those studying one of the allied health profession subjects.

The Government announced in December 2019 that new and continuing students from September 2020 will receive a £5,000-£8,000 grant during their course to help with their cost of living – and they will not have to pay it back. Eligible students will receive at least £5,000 and an additional £1,000 for those with child dependents with further funding of up to £2,000 available to new students in regions or disciplines that are struggling to recruit.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy: Camberwell and Peckham

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[24225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that women in Camberwell and Peckham constituency have adequate access to Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT); and if he make an assessment of the adequacy of the medicine supply chain in relation to HRT.

Jo Churchill:

We are aware of ongoing supply issues with some hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations for a variety of reasons.

The National Health Service receives updates on the supply situation and availability of HRT products, and we 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.

We have been working closely with all suppliers to resolve the issues as quickly as possible and maintain overall supply to patients across the United Kingdom, including those living in Camberwell and Peckham. Although some HRT products are still affected by supply issues, alternatives remain available, and the overall supply situation has been improving since February 2020 and will continue to improve over the coming months.

■ Incontinence: Health Services

Rosie Cooper:

[\[24295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeframe is for the proposed audit of continence services by the National Bowel and Bladder Health Project; and when the results of that audit will be published.

Helen Whately:

The National Bladder and Bowel Project Group will undertake an audit of clinical commissioning groups across all regions in England to assess the commissioning of continence services later this year. A more specific timeframe has not been set at this stage.

■ Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[24285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will request NHS Digital to routinely publish waiting times for joint replacement surgery as part of NHS England's Consultant-led referral to treatment waiting times dataset.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[24286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish an action plan with proposed timeframes to (a) improve access and (b) reduce waiting times to joint replacement surgery and to reduce waiting times.

Caroline Lucas:[\[24308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to retain the 18-week referral-to-treatment target for joint replacement surgery; what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the health of patients with (a) arthritis and (b) other conditions of changing the 18-week target; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

A maximum waiting time of 18 weeks from referral to elective treatment, including for joint replacement surgery, is the existing National Health Service access standard.

Data on waiting times for joint replacement surgery is already published on a monthly basis by NHS England and NHS Improvement. A detailed breakdown of the waiting times for different specialities are available on the NHS website.

A clinically-led review of NHS access standards is ongoing. NHS England and NHS Improvement's final recommendations to the Government are due by the Spring and the Government will carefully consider these recommendations.

The Government is providing an additional £33.9 billion a year by 2023/24 to support measures set out in the NHS Long Term Plan. Additionally, a reform of outpatient services is underway that will reduce the need for patients to attend unnecessary face to face appointments, saving patients time and freeing up medical and nursing time.

This funding increase and clinical reform will reduce the demand on services while also growing capacity, thereby allowing increasing amounts of planned surgical activity. This in turn will decrease the waiting list and help get the NHS back on track to delivering performance standards.

■ Lung Diseases

Alex Sobel: [R] [24428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Taskforce for Lung Health's five year plan to improve respiratory health.

Helen Whately:

The National Health Service has worked closely with the Taskforce for Lung Health to design the respiratory ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan.

The national respiratory programme was developed using the recommendations from the Taskforce and further close collaboration will ensure alignment. The key objectives that address the recommendations in the Taskforce's report include improvements in early and accurate diagnosis; pulmonary rehabilitation; medications management; and self-management.

Separately to the respiratory programme, NHS funded smoking cessation interventions will also address recommendations from the Taskforce.

■ Malnutrition: South Yorkshire

Dan Jarvis: [R] [24353]

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

Dan Jarvis: [R] [24354]

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

Dan Jarvis: [R] [24355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to enable and support the prevention of malnutrition at the community level in South Yorkshire.

Jo Churchill:

Malnutrition, or under-nutrition, is both a cause and a consequence of ill health and the Government recognises the multiple complex issues associated with it. A suite of resources are available to help individuals and local health and care professionals prevent and identify malnutrition.

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 can be viewed at the following link:

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 can be viewed at the following link:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition/

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence quality standard 24 on 'Nutrition support in adults' 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. QS24 can be viewed at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/QS24

■ Medical Equipment

Hilary Benn:

[25020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) available ventilators and (b) staff trained in the use of those ventilators in the NHS in the latest period for which figures are available.

Edward Argar:

Ventilator machines are usually linked to patients in Intensive Care Units/Critical Care/High Dependency Units, although some patients may have them at home or use Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines to assist with their breathing.

Information on Critical Care Bed Capacity is published by NHS England and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/critical-care-capacity/>

Availability of an NHS Critical Care Bed indicates the associated number of National Health Service staff with the appropriate skills and training are available to deliver the required treatment.

Jo Stevens:

[25146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the adequacy of the number of ventilators in use in the NHS in England.

Edward Argar:

Ventilator machines are usually linked to patients in Intensive Care Units/Critical Care/High Dependency Units, although some patients may have them at home or use Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machines to assist with their breathing.

Information on Critical Care Bed Capacity is published by NHS England and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/critical-care-capacity/>

■ Medical Records: Disclosure of Information

Jeremy Hunt: [\[24300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the population has been able to access their medical records (a) online and (b) via an app in each year since 2012.

Jeremy Hunt: [\[24301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the population have accessed their medical records (a) online and (b) via an app in each year since 2012.

Edward Argar:

The Department is committed to ensuring that citizens using the National Health Service are able to access high quality, effective healthcare services that are responsive to patients' needs. Digital tools, such as the NHS App, are able to support people to access their medical records.

The percentage of the general practitioner (GP) registered population that have registered and are able to access their medical record online is as follows:

MONTH/YEAR	% OF POPULATION THAT ARE REGISTERED AND ABLE TO ACCESS THEIR MEDICAL RECORD ONLINE (INCLUDING VIA AN APP)
December 2015	0.6%
December 2016	0.9%
December 2017	4.30%
December 2018	6.77%
December 2019	8.66%

Prior to 2015, no patients were registered to access their medical record online.

The NHS App launched following a period of testing from September 2018 to January 2019, and now has over 250,000 registered users.

The proportion of the GP-registered population who have registered to access and have accessed their medical records via the NHS App is as follows:

DATE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED FOR NHS APP (% OF ELIGIBLE GP POPULATION REGISTERED FOR NHS APP)	NUMBER OF UNIQUE MEDICAL RECORD ACCESSES VIA THE NHS APP EACH MONTH
December 2018	3,260 (0.01%)	

DATE	NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED FOR NHS APP (% OF ELIGIBLE GP POPULATION REGISTERED FOR NHS APP)	NUMBER OF UNIQUE MEDICAL RECORD ACCESSES VIA THE NHS APP EACH MONTH
January 2019	3,886 (0.01%)	
February 2019	4,552 (0.01%)	1,248
March 2019	7,666 (0.01%)	1,984
April 2019	15,326 (0.03%)	4,696
May 2019	29,802 (0.06%)	11,828
June 2019	44,759 (0.09%)	19,270
July 2019	64,382 (0.13%)	26,358
August 2019	86,934 (0.17%)	31,807
September 2019	111,076 (0.22%)	36,870
October 2019	144,378 (0.28%)	51,093
November 2019	179,666 (0.35%)	57,586
December 2019	212,633 (0.41%)	57,415

We do not have data on the number of users who have solely accessed their records online. However we do capture the total number of monthly transactions for both online and app access. In the month of December 2019 patients accessed their medical records 1 million times.

DATE	TOTAL MEDICAL RECORD VIEW TRANSACTIONS (VIA ONLINE AND AN APP)
December 2015	Data quality issues
December 2016	Data quality issues
December 2017	Data quality issues
December 2018	0.7 million
December 2019	1.0 million

■ Menorrhagia

Sarah Champion:

[\[24358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has made an estimate of the effect on the economy of women leaving employment as a result of living with heavy menstrual bleeding; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

No estimate has been made of the effect on the economy of women leaving employment as a result of heavy menstrual bleeding.

NHS England advise that any woman who is experiencing pain, or discomfort due to heavy menstrual bleeding should seek advice from a general practitioner (GP) as a first course of action. Advice for this is available on nhs.uk, where a quick 'Heavy period self-assessment' can advise on simple steps that may help, as well as speaking to a GP.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has produced a guideline on assessment and treatment of heavy menstrual bleeding, which was published in March 2018.

Sarah Champion:

[\[24359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women and girls have been (a) diagnosed with and (b) treated for heavy menstrual bleeding by the NHS in each calendar year since 2015.

Edward Argar:

Figures on how many women and girls have been diagnosed and treated by the National Health Service for heavy menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia) per calendar year are not held centrally.

NHS England advise that there is not always an underlying cause for heavy periods, which can be common, however they can also result from problems such as fibroids or endometriosis. It is therefore important to get persistent symptoms checked out by speaking to a general practitioner (GP). Advice for this is available on nhs.uk, where a quick 'Heavy period self-assessment' can advise on simple steps that may help, as well as speaking to a GP.

■ Mental Health Services: Telephone Services

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[23662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of having a single three digit phone line joining together his Department, charities and other organisations for people suffering from mental health problems.

Edward Argar:

We have made no such assessment.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to implementing age-appropriate mental health crisis care support, 24 hours a day through NHS 111 by 2023/24.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Sales**

Mike Kane: [25115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential health benefits of bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans from 2040 to 2035.

Jo Churchill:

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health, with long-term exposure to man-made pollution in the United Kingdom estimated to contribute towards 28,000 to 36,000 deaths each year. In May 2018, Public Health England estimated that there would be over 2.4 million new cases of disease attributable to air pollution by 2035. Further information on this is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-pollution-a-tool-to-estimate-healthcare-costs>

The Government's Clean Air Strategy aims to reduce emissions from transport. The phase out of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans, will make an important contribution to reducing the levels of particulate matter and consequently the numbers of new disease cases such as asthma, coronary heart disease and lung cancer caused by air pollution.

■ **Nappies**

Martyn Day: [25156]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of reusable nappies on childhood toilet training.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

Martyn Day: [25157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of disposable nappies on rates of diagnosis of bladder and bowel issues in children.

Jo Churchill:

An assessment has not been made of the effect of disposable nappies on incidences of bladder and bowel issues in children.

Public Health England continues to monitor the issue.

■ Negative Ion Products: Health Hazards

Kirsty Blackman: [\[22394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent assessment of the effect on health of negative ion products; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has not undertaken a recent assessment of the possible health effects associated with the use, or wearing, of negative ion products.

■ NHS

James Murray: [\[23637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what stakeholder engagement his Department undertook on legislative proposals to support the NHS Long Term Plan.

Edward Argar:

The Government's priority is to support the National Health Service to improve patient outcomes by delivering the Long Term Plan.

Last year, NHS England and NHS Improvement carried out an engagement process before making recommendations to the Government for legislative change. We are currently considering the NHS's recommendations thoroughly and will bring forward detailed proposals shortly.

■ NHS 111: Merseyside

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[24249\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Organs: Donors

Dan Jarvis: [\[25101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that no organ is declined due to a lack of resource after the implementation of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

Dan Jarvis: [\[25102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2020 to Question 8296 on Transplant Surgery: Finance, by what date providers have been asked to return their capacity and capability assessments to NHS Blood and Transport and NHS England.

Helen Whately:

The organ allocation systems in place ensure that when an individual centre refuses an organ, that organ is offered within an agreed sequence to other centres. Data on organ utilisation is captured and published.

NHS England and NHS Improvement originally asked for provider responses on capacity and capability assessments to be returned by the end of October 2019 and local discussions on those assessments are ongoing.

The new United Kingdom strategy for organ donation and transplantation to be published later this year by NHS Blood and Transplant will set out actions to improve organ utilisation across all organs taking into account the impact of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

■ Plastic Surgery

Tulip Siddiq: [\[23430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the NHS of treating complications after dermal filler injections.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

■ Podiatry: Medical Equipment

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[19721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the NHS policy is on provision of silicone ankle foot orthosis; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

National Health Service organisations can currently buy goods and services from many sources, within the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and national and local procurement policies, and there is no single or definitive list of approved suppliers to the NHS.

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for commissioning health services for their local populations. This includes technologies, medical devices and equipment. CCGs are best placed as clinically led organisations that have both the local knowledge and accountability to make commissioning decisions in the best interests of their patients.

■ Rare Diseases: Clinical Trials

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[24421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the UK will participate in EU-led clinical trials for personalised medicines for the treatment of rare diseases.

Helen Whately:

The Department funds research into rare diseases through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

The NIHR does not limit the type of research taking place in the United Kingdom and welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

Whether UK-based researchers participate in any particular clinical trial is a decision made by researchers themselves, depending on the subject matter of the proposed study and the expertise required to undertake the research.

■ Social Services

Helen Hayes: [\[25163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he is making on long-term reform of 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. As the Prime Minister has said, the Government will bring forward a plan for social care this year.

We are commencing cross-party talks. In the first phase, we are inviting hon. Members and Peers to voice their views, proposed solutions and concerns about reforming the way that people pay for their care.

HOME OFFICE

■ European Arrest Warrants

Stella Creasy: [\[21979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 3740 on European Arrest Warrants, whether European Arrest Warrants issued after 31 January 2020 in respect of British citizens will continue to be valid during the transition period.

James Brokenshire:

European Arrest Warrants issued during the Transition Period are valid during the Transition Period.

The Withdrawal Agreement provides that at the end of the Transition Period, in the absence of any other arrangements, procedures under the European Arrest Warrant Framework Decision will continue to conclusion in circumstances where an arrest has already been made.

Stella Creasy: [\[21980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether European Arrest Warrants issued to British citizens while the UK was a member of the EU will remain valid at the end of the transition period.

James Brokenshire:

The Withdrawal Agreement provides that at the end of the Transition Period, in the absence of any other arrangements, procedures under the European Arrest Warrant Framework Decision will continue to conclusion in circumstances where an arrest has already been made.

Home Office: Written Questions**Gavin Robinson:**[\[20498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to answer Question 3232 tabled by the hon. Member for West Dunbartonshire on 14 January 2020.

Kevin Foster:

The responses for UIN 3232 and 3233 were given on the 9th March 2020.

Immigration: EU Nationals**Neale Hanvey:**[\[24444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether EU citizens that have not applied for settled status by 31 December 2020 will be able to remain in the UK after this date in the event that an agreement is not reached by the end of the transition period.

Kevin Foster:

The UK left the EU on 31 January on the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement reached in October 2019. No further agreement is required and the protections for resident EU citizens provided in the Withdrawal Agreement are now underpinned by the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 and by the EU Settlement Scheme.

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, EU citizens resident in the UK by the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 will be eligible to apply for UK immigration status under the EU Settlement Scheme. Their current residence rights under EU law will be protected during the grace period which will apply from 1 January 2021 until the application deadline of 30 June 2021. In addition, where a person has reasonable grounds for missing this deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

Immigration: Northern Ireland**Martin Docherty-Hughes:**[\[3232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraphs 13-15 of Annex A of the New Decade, New Approach document of 9 January 2020 regarding Government commitments on family migration arrangements for the people of Northern Ireland, within what (a) timeframe and (b) legislative vehicle those commitments will be made.

Martin Docherty-Hughes:[\[3233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraphs 13-15 of Annex A of the New Decade, New Approach document of 9 January 2020 regarding Government commitments on family migration arrangements for the people of Northern

Ireland, whether they will be able to access on a permanent basis similar rights to family reunification as those available to Irish citizens in the UK under EEA regulations.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office intends to change the UK's Immigration Rules so family members of the people of Northern Ireland can apply for immigration status on broadly the same terms as family members of Irish citizens and will open the route in the near future.

■ **Migrant Workers**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[25097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the evidential basis is that the increased use of technology and automation by employers will be able to reduce the demand of migrant workers.

Kevin Foster:

In delivering on its manifesto commitments for a new points-based system, the Government has considered relevant views, evidence, and analysis.

We need to shift the focus of our economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe, with immigration being considered alongside investment in technology, innovation, automation and the development of the UK's domestic labour force.

Immigration must be considered alongside investment in and development of the UK's domestic labour force.

There are over eight million economically inactive people in the UK, nearly two million of whom say they want a job. Employers need to invest in the people already here and make jobs more attractive for UK workers, whilst looking to schemes like disability, confident to expand their potential to recruit.

■ **Organised Crime and Terrorism: Ireland**

Stephen Farry:

[\[23661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the decision not to seek the UK's ongoing participation in the European Arrest Warrant on the ability of the UK and Ireland to tackle cross-border terrorism and organised crime on the island of Ireland.

James Brokenshire:

The Government stands ready to discuss an agreement with the EU on law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

As set out in our approach to negotiations, the agreement should provide for fast-track extradition arrangements with appropriate further safeguards beyond those provided for in the European Arrest Warrant.

Such an agreement should equip operational partners on both sides with the capabilities that help protect citizens and bring criminals to justice, including in relation to North-South security and criminal justice cooperation.

■ Refugees: Syria

Theresa Villiers:

[24282]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Syrian refugees have been admitted to the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics. Latest statistics published on 27 February 2020 show that as of December 2019, a total of 19,353 people had been resettled in the UK across 327 local authorities under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme since it began.

The next set of figures will be in the quarterly release on 21 May 2020 and will cover the period January to March 2020.

We have committed to resettle 20,000 vulnerable refugees who have fled Syria and are on track to deliver the full commitment in 2020.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

Alex Sobel:

[24427]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish a response to her Department's call for evidence on abuse and violence towards shop staff, which closed on 28 June 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

I committed to publishing the government's response in March.

■ Undocumented Migrants

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[24233]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent migrants from illegally entering the UK from continental ports; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[24234]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that migrants who have illegally entered the UK from continental ports are returned safely to their countries of origin; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The UK continues to collaborate with France under the terms of the Sandhurst Treaty to tackle illegal migration across the shared border. Under the Treaty, significant

improvements were made to the security at northern French ports such as Calais, Dukirk, and the Eurostar Terminal at Coquelles. Last year, more than 35,000 attempts to enter the UK illegally were prevented at our juxtaposed controls in northern France and Belgium. The UK-FR Migration Committee takes responsibility for oversight of these projects, for discussing current pressures and agreeing new joint projects.

Senior Home Office officials and operational partners are in regular discussions with officials from the Belgian government to identify immediate action that can be taken at the Port of Zeebrugge to tackle illegal migration through the port and reduce the risks to migrants.

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Protection is granted where a claimant has a well-founded fear of persecution under the Refugee Convention or their circumstances engage our obligations under Article 3 (ECHR). Those found not to need protection are refused and if unsuccessful at a subsequent appeal will be removed from the UK.

■ Visas: Married People

Kerry McCarthy: [24281]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of children in families that are unable to satisfy the requirements for a spousal visa.

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>.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

John Healey: [25013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 February 2020 to Question 22361 on Affordable Housing, if he will publish data for the annual amount of grant funding allocated to affordable housing in (a) 2008-09 and (b) 2009-10.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG and its predecessor DCLG publicly publish accounts and financial statements going back to 2010/11 which can be accessed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/247455/0971.pdf.

The overall investment in the 2008-11 National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) was £8 billion at the start of the programme, with a further £2.28 billion allocated to the programme for residual delivery in the 2011-15 Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) for a total of just over £10 billion.

Details of these amounts may be found at:

- The NAHP prospectus:
https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Policy_documents/nahp_08-11.pdf.
- The 2011-15 AHP Framework:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/247455/0971.pdf.

To provide data regarding the annual amount of grant funding allocated to affordable housing by the department in 2008/9 and 2009/10 internally would be at a disproportionate cost to the department. However, this data may also be found in the public domain at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>.

■ Building Regulations: Energy

Kenny MacAskill:

[24431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to maintain the regulations and standards of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive after the transition period.

Christopher Pincher:

There are no plans to repeal the regulations and standards relating to the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive at this time.

■ Change of Use

Rachel Hopkins:

[25220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that offices converted into flats through permitted development rights meet planning permission regulations.

Christopher Pincher:

All new homes in England, whether granted permission through a national permitted development right or following a planning application, are required to meet Building Regulations. Developments granted permission through permitted development rights are required to meet the conditions set out in the General Permitted Development Order.

■ Community Housing Fund

Louise Haigh: [\[24376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend the Community Housing Fund for a further five years.

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.

■ Council Housing: Luton

Rachel Hopkins: [\[25219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to increase council housing stock in Luton.

Christopher Pincher:

We have given councils, including Luton Borough Council, a range of tools to deliver a new generation of council housing. We have abolished the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap and given councils a longer-term rent deal for 5 years from 2020.

Additionally, councils can bid into the £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme to secure funding for new council homes.

Councils across the country are benefiting from these measures and we expect at least 10,000 council homes to be delivered per year by 2021/22.

■ High Rise Flats: House Insurance

Shabana Mahmood: [\[25056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support is available to leaseholders with properties cladded in flammable materials whose insurance premiums have increased significantly following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is aware that concerns about cladding and other fire safety measures may have an effect on some insurance premiums. As with all insurance renewals, building owners should engage with brokers early and provide as much information as possible in order to manage their building's insurance premiums. We are engaging with the insurance industry to better understand their approach to risk.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Hilary Benn: [\[25025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with representatives of the insurance industry on the cost of

insurance for leaseholders with unsafe (a) ACM, (b) HPL and (c) other types of cladding on their homes.

Christopher Pincher:

Government has ongoing engagement with the insurance industry on a number of issues, including the cost and availability of insurance for high rise residential buildings.

Shabana Mahmood:

[25052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to assess the health and safety risks of buildings cladded with non-ACM material.

Christopher Pincher:

Acting on advice from the Expert Panel, the Government has commissioned research from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to support further understanding of the fire performance of Non-Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) external wall systems. The results of this research will be published shortly.

It is the view of the Expert Panel that ACM (and other metal composites) with unmodified polyethylene core remains the most significant fire hazard. The Expert Panel advice can be found here at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-advice-for-building-owners-including-fire-doors>.

Shabana Mahmood:

[25053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to support leaseholders whose properties are cladded with flammable material not covered by the ACM cladding remediation fund.

Shabana Mahmood:

[25054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will provide financial support to leaseholders whose properties do not exceed 18m in height and are cladded in (a) ACM and (b) non-ACM flammable materials.

Shabana Mahmood:

[25055]

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 financial implications for leaseholders who own properties cladded in flammable materials.

Christopher Pincher:

Residents' safety remains this Government's utmost priority and there is no excuse for building owners not ensuring that residents are safe in their homes. The Government will continue to support leaseholders and is reviewing options on how best to do so.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

John Healey: [24241]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much Housing Infrastructure Fund forward funding has been approved by each local authority.

Christopher Pincher:

The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a competitive £5.5 billion fund awarded to areas with the greatest housing need to support infrastructure projects that will unlock up to 650,000 homes. To date, circa £3 billion has been allocated across every English region to local authorities whose bids meet the funding criteria. Information on Housing Infrastructure Fund spend is routinely published and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-infrastructure-fund>.

Housing: Carbon Emissions

Louise Haigh: [24375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the net carbon footprint of homes built under the Future Homes Standard.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is fully committed to meeting its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of buildings has to make in meeting it. We have committed to introduce a Future Homes Standard from 2025 which means that new homes will be fit for the future, with low carbon heating and lower energy use through high levels of energy efficiency. In October 2019 we published a consultation on the Future Homes Standard which proposed that new homes built to the Future Homes Standard from 2025 should have carbon dioxide emissions 75-80 per cent lower than those built to current building regulations standards. The Future Homes Standard consultation closed on 7 February 2020. The responses we have received will be considered carefully and a Government response will be published in due course.

Housing: Construction

John Healey: [24242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much (a) development and (b) infrastructure finance has been allocated from the Home Building Fund, by each local authority.

Christopher Pincher:

The Home Building Fund supports developers to either directly build new homes or to deliver the infrastructure required to enable construction of housing to start on a site. It is a market-facing fund that is available for projects that are viable investments according to our published criteria, and it does not operate on a fixed bidding timetable. Homes England market the fund through continuous market engagement

including with trade bodies such as the Home Builders Federation, and any developer is free to apply to the fund through the Homes England portal. There is no predetermined geographic allocation of funding and the consideration of individual transactions is based on investment criteria around viability.

Table 1 shows the investment committed directly to individual sites in each local authority area.

In addition to investment being made in individual sites or projects, a number of large-scale investment funds and national lending alliances have also been supported through the Home Building Fund. This investment is not allocated at local authority level, so a further £354 million development finance and £90 million infrastructure investment has been invested through these national vehicles.

This data is based on projects that have been supported by investment made through the Home Building Fund since its launch in October 2016.

Table 1. Home Building Fund Investment by Local Authority

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
Amber Valley	4,919,747	4,401,420
Ashfield	349,118	
Ashford	2,350,000	49,585,923
Barnsley	2,054,248	
Barrow-in-Furness	1,900,000	
Basildon	-	
Bassetlaw	1,489,000	3,943,113
Bedford	9,265,137	
Birmingham	7,451,053	
Blackburn with Darwen	9,279,790	
Bolsover	5,874,325	
Boston	3,229,275	
Bracknell Forest	865,000	19,999,531
Bradford	9,914,991	
Braintree	400,000	

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
Bristol	24,314,371	
Bromsgrove	-	
Broxbourne	3,556,299	
Broxtowe	3,268,136	
Burnley	-	
Cannock Chase	1,031,747	
Cheltenham	-	
Cheshire East	20,657,652	
Cheshire West and Chester	13,609,937	
Chesterfield	4,693,612	
Chorley	610,097	
Colchester	1,285,855	
Copeland	-	
Corby	-	36,758,320
Cornwall	10,743,668	
County Durham	12,368,152	
Coventry	8,838,081	
Craven	5,860,393	
Darlington	452,919	
Daventry	851,291	
Derby	-	
Doncaster	4,683,711	-
Dudley	454,726	
East Dorset	-	
East Hampshire	5,701,257	26,882,064

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
East Lindsey	2,262,725	
East Riding of Yorkshire	8,652,106	8,331,000
Exeter	148,905	
Fylde	3,724,662	
Gravesham	778,887	
Guildford	2,117,553	
Halton	748,483	
Hambleton	11,899,834	
Harborough	1,126,150	
Harrogate	9,188,979	
Hartlepool	5,377,417	
Herefordshire	311,970	
High Peak	1,486,137	
Hounslow	5,830,189	
Huntingdonshire	16,057,996	20,629,062
Hyndburn	381,435	
Ipswich	16,433,396	
Isle of Wight	4,457,039	
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	-	
Kingston Upon Hull	889,976	
Kirklees	9,197,126	
Knowsley	-	
Lambeth	4,827,758	
Lancaster	6,745,455	
Leeds	8,137,747	8,151,897

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
Leicester	3,152,066	
Liverpool	-	
London wide	30,000,076	
Malvern Hills	1,420,000	
Manchester	-	
Mansfield	503,774	11,990,195
Medway Towns	7,638,070	
Merton	21,210,179	
Mid Devon	719,700	
Mid Suffolk	-	
Newark and Sherwood	542,149	
Newcastle upon Tyne	7,039,878	
Newcastle-under-Lyme	877,300	
Newham	42,569,252	-
North Devon	7,340,225	-
North Dorset	3,113,766	
North East Derbyshire	5,049,798	
North East Lincolnshire	2,201,975	
North Lincolnshire	930,298	17,084,996
North Norfolk	879,798	
North Tyneside	805,347	
North Warwickshire	1,471,000	
North West Leicestershire	1,928,928	
Northampton	775,136	
Northumberland	10,747,043	

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
Norwich	4,496,657	
Nottingham	908,579	
Oxford	-	
Pendle	1,506,314	
Peterborough	-	
Plymouth	10,034,619	
Preston	6,925,519	
Redbridge	12,578,201	
Redcar and Cleveland	1,327,636	
Ribble Valley	3,651,603	
Richmondshire	2,433,369	
Rossendale	3,027,150	
Rotherham	3,865,491	
Rushcliffe	-	-
Rutland	2,000,000	
Ryedale	48,214	
Salford	58,501,305	3,207,462
Sandwell	7,843,328	
Scarborough	3,886,435	3,000,396
Sedgemoor	1,180,142	
Sefton	509,665	
Sheffield	8,354,481	
Shropshire	9,017,797	
South Derbyshire	1,861,294	-
South Gloucestershire	-	

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
South Hams	6,429,278	
South Holland	2,751,122	
South Kesteven	650,551	
South Norfolk	426,719	
South Oxfordshire	609,765	
South Somerset	977,032	
Southampton	5,163,290	6,703,161
St. Helens	5,711,227	
Staffordshire Moorlands	2,559,640	
Stockton-on-Tees	9,105,148	
Stoke-on-Trent	3,943,242	
Stratford-on-Avon	2,938,961	
Stroud	1,098,678	
Sunderland	15,856,615	
Sutton	-	
Swale	-	
Tameside	-	
Teignbridge	-	
Telford and Wrekin	2,270,615	
Torbay	-	
Torridge	876,334	
Vale of White Horse	10,154,011	
Wakefield	2,968,661	
Warrington	1,682,307	
Watford	-	

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
ALLERDALE	4,225,324	
Wellingborough	1,443,000	68,435,581
West Berkshire	1,623,811	
West Devon	1,400,756	
West Dorset	-	
West Lancashire	917,949	
Weymouth and Portland	-	
Wigan	6,542,029	
Wiltshire	1,848,686	
Winchester	2,579,916	
Wirral	1,403,375	
Wolverhampton	2,797,203	
Wyre	1,433,525	
York	500,207	

John Healey:

[24245]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding in affordable housing grant has been paid to providers under Strategic Housing Partnerships in each quarter for which figures are available.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government does not publish how much grant funding for affordable housing is paid out through Strategic Partnerships on a quarterly basis.

John Healey:

[24246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much was spent on affordable housing grant by Homes England in 2018-19.

Christopher Pincher:

Homes England 2019-19 expenditure on affordable housing grants is available in the public domain at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/816287/Spread_version_FINAL_Homes_England_Annual_report_Financial_Statements_v30_10_07_19.pdf.

Housing: Disability

Jim Shannon: [\[23455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to increase the provision of wheelchair accessible housing for disabled people.

Christopher Pincher:

We will consult shortly on various options to raise accessibility standards in new homes, including ways to improve wheelchair accessible housing provision. The Government also published planning guidance in June 2019 to help councils meet current standards for wheelchair accessible housing in England. This sets an expectation that planning policies on housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standard for wheelchair user dwellings.

Alex Cunningham: [\[24339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made on the consultation on mandatory accessible housing standards for disabled people announced on 4 September 2019.

Christopher Pincher:

We will consult shortly on various options to raise accessibility standards in all new homes.

Alex Cunningham: [\[24340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to improve the provision of wheelchair accessible housing.

Christopher Pincher:

We will consult shortly on various options to raise accessibility standards in new homes, including ways to improve wheelchair accessible housing provision.

Government also published planning guidance, in June 2019, to help councils meet current standards for wheelchair accessible housing in England.

This sets an expectation that planning policies on housing should make use of the Government's optional technical standard for wheelchair user dwellings.

Housing: Disability and Older People

Jim Shannon: [\[23456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made on improving access to housing for (a) older and (b) disabled people.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is currently doing a full review of Part M of Building Regulations

The Government's planning guidance on housing for older and disabled people was published on 26 June 2019. Our competition to deliver homes fit for the future was launched on 2 March 2020, intending to deliver new low carbon, age-friendly homes.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[24341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to improve the availability of housing for older and disabled people.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is currently doing a full review of Part M of Building Regulations and we will consult shortly on various options to raise accessibility standards in new homes

Government's planning guidance on housing for older and disabled people was published on 26 June 2019. Our competition to deliver homes fit for the future was launched on 2 March 2020, intending to deliver new low carbon, age-friendly homes.

■ Housing: Energy

Louise Haigh:

[\[24374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing the Future Homes Standard on energy efficiency before 2025.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is fully committed to meeting its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of buildings has to make in meeting it.

We have committed to introduce a Future Homes Standard from 2025 which means that new homes will be fit for the future, with low carbon heating and lower energy use through high levels of energy efficiency. As a stepping stone to the Future Homes Standard, we have consulted on a meaningful and achievable increase to the energy efficiency standards for new homes to be introduced through the Building Regulations in 2020, with a further strengthening by 2025. The consultation responses we have received will be considered carefully and a Government response will be published in due course.

■ Housing: Travellers

Elliot Colburn:

[\[23528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to update Government Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments guidance; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

In February 2019 we announced a package of measures to help support site provision as part of the Government response to the Consultation on Unauthorised

Encampments, including a commitment to finalise the 2016 draft guidance on assessing housing need including for those residing in caravans and houseboats.

■ Landlords

Catherine West: [\[24400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle rogue landlords.

Christopher Pincher:

Through the Housing and Planning Act 2016 we have brought in strong enforcement powers for local authorities to tackle rogue landlords. These include the introduction of civil penalties of up to £30,000 and banning orders for use against the worst and most persistent offenders. We have also extended rent repayment orders which require a landlord to repay rent when they have not complied with the law.

My Department has also created a database of rogue landlords and property agents and as part of the Renters' Reform Bill we have committed to opening up access to the database to empower tenants to make more informed choices.

In addition, since 2019 we have awarded over £6 million in grant funding to local authorities to boost their enforcement work, fostering innovative approaches and sharing best practice to tackle the minority of landlords who deliberately flout the law.

■ Leasehold: Reform

Steve Reed: [\[24361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 21370, on Leasehold: Reform, for what reasons he has provided actions undertaken by his Department in 2018 in answer to the referenced question regarding the 2019 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee's report entitled Leasehold reform, Twelfth Report of Session 2017-19, HC 1468.

Luke Hall:

Question 21370, answered on 2 March, related to a request by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee in its 2019 report on leasehold reform for a review of the Leasehold Advisory Service to be undertaken. A review of the organisation was undertaken in 2018, a few months prior to the Committee's report, and there are ongoing actions since the review which were outlined in the previous answer.

■ Owner Occupation: Service Charges

Nick Fletcher: [\[23583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support home owners who are subject to agreements to pay for uncapped management fees and maintenance fees.

Luke Hall:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service.

Homeowners who pay estate rent charges for the management or maintenance of the communal areas on an estate should be able to challenge these costs. That is why the Government intends to legislate to give freeholders on private and mixed-tenure estates equivalent rights to leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate rent charges, as well as a right to apply to the First-tier Tribunal to appoint a new manager for the provision of services covered by estate rent charges.

■ Planning**Siobhain McDonagh:**[\[23581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timetable is for the publication of the Accelerated Planning White Paper.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government will publish a Planning White Paper shortly. It will set out our ambitious agenda for planning reform over this Parliament to make the planning system clearer, more accessible and more certain for all users.

■ Property Development: Floods**John Healey:**[\[22358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many homes have been built in national floodzone three in each of the last 10 years, by region.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not hold figures for the number of homes built in National Flood Zone 3.

Estimates of the numbers of new homes built in National Flood Zone 3 within each region can be obtained by comparing the percentage of new residential addresses created that were in National Flood Zone 3, with the number of new build completions by region as published in Table 118 at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/850826/Live_Table_118.xls.

A table has been provided giving percentages for each region for all homes built within National Flood Zone 3, from the beginning of the new data series in 2013-14 to the latest year available.

All local planning authorities are expected to follow the strict tests set out in national planning policy and guidance, which includes steering development away from high risk flood areas. Where development in flood risk areas is considered, national planning policy is clear that it should be safe, resilient and not increase flood risk

anywhere. We have been clear that new housing is not appropriate and should not be allowed in a functional floodplain, where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

■ Second Homes

Duncan Baker: [\[24445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to limit second home ownership.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has introduced a series of measures to help mitigate second home ownership. In 2013 the Government removed the requirement for local authorities to offer a discount on second homes enabling them to charge the full rate of council tax. Additionally, in April 2016, the Government introduced a 3 per cent higher rate of Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) for those purchasing additional properties.

■ Sleeping Rough: Death

Lilian Greenwood: [\[25088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many (a) deaths, (b) serious injuries and (c) near misses have been recorded as a result of people taking shelter in refuse bins which are then emptied into refuse vehicles; and what steps he plans to take to help prevent such incidents.

Neil Coyle: [\[25118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many deaths have been recorded as a result of homeless people taking shelter in bins which are then removed by refuse workers in each of the last twelve months; what steps he is taking to help prevent further such deaths; and whether he plans to provide training to refuse workers to help reduce the risk of further deaths.

Claudia Webbe: [\[25214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many deaths have been recorded as a result of homeless people taking shelter in bins which are then removed by refuse workers in each of the last twelve months; what steps he is taking to help prevent further such deaths; and whether he plans to provide training to refuse workers to help reduce the risk of further deaths.

Luke Hall:

Every premature death of someone homeless is one too many and we take this matter extremely seriously. It should not happen that people die prematurely and on the street because they are homeless.

We are absolutely committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of this parliament. To achieve this, we are providing £437 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in 2020/2021. This marks a £69 million increase in funding from the previous year.

This year we have expanded the Rough Sleeping Initiative with investment of £46 million for 246 areas – providing funding for an estimated 2,600 bed spaces and 750 staff. Next year, we are allocating a further £112 million to around 270 areas, funding up to 6,000 bed spaces and 2,500 staff. And this is having an impact. The RSI impact evaluation shows that the Initiative has reduced the number of people sleeping rough by 32 per cent in the areas funded, compared to the number it would have been had the RSI not been in place.

We do not hold data on the number of deaths as a result of people taking shelter in refuse bins. However, we understand some local councils and businesses have conducted research and supplied advice on this issue in recent years.

This Government is aware that a skilled frontline workforce is essential to delivering good services and ultimately reducing homelessness. Delivery of the Key Groups Training programme launched in Summer 2019. The training programme is expected to cater for 3,450 members of the frontline homelessness workforce by the end of June 2020.

Local authorities and outreach teams work tirelessly to ensure that appropriate support is given to all rough sleepers regardless of where they are found, be that in tents, doorways, bins or on the street.

■ Social Rented Housing

Mr David Davis:

[24239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government has allocated to new social housing in each year since 2010.

Christopher Pincher:

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

The table below provides details on affordable homes programme funding since 2010. This data may also be found in the public domain at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

FINANCIAL YEAR	AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE
2010/11	£2,660,493,213
2011/12	£1,431,994,000
2012/13	£1,136,633,000
2013/14	£1,219,494,000
2014/15	£1,342,398,000

FINANCIAL YEAR	AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE
2015/16	£1,256,863,000
2016/17	£747,333,000
2017/18	£1,308,730,000
2018/19	£1,670,312,000

The way in which our delivery partners Homes England and the Greater London Authority allocate this funding across the country is publicly available. To view the further allocations across England regions and local authorities please see the following:

- London funding allocations:
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hfl_allocations_-_location_and_provider.pdf
- Homes England AHPprovider funding:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865148/Funding_by_lead_provider_Final.csv/preview

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Developing Countries: Human Trafficking

Preet Kaur Gill:

[23504]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February 2020 to Question 18684 on Developing Countries: Human Trafficking, whether her Department has made an estimate of the number of adolescent girls protected by the Children on the Move programme.

James Cleverly:

Adolescent girls (aged 10-19) are amongst the age range of children and young people being reached by critical protective services in 'Children on the Move'. We do not currently disaggregate to this level, apart from in the skills building component, called UPSHIFT. UPSHIFT targets at-risk young people – of whom approximately 47% are adolescent girls.

'Children on the Move' is currently reviewing ethical and data protection issues as it shifts to increasing the level of age disaggregation used. We expect that by the end of the programme (December 2020) we will have figures on how many adolescent girls have been reached by the programme.

■ Female Genital Mutilation

Hywel Williams:

[\[23440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much and what proportion of Official Development Assistance was spent on tackling female genital mutilation in each financial year since 2015.

Wendy Morton:

The UK leads the world in our support to the Africa-led movement to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). In 2018, we announced a further £50 million UK aid package – the biggest single donor investment worldwide to date – to tackle this issue across the most-affected countries in Africa.

The table below sets out how much DFID spent on specific programmes to end FGM in the years 2015-18. Estimates for 2019 spending will be available in autumn 2020.

DFID also supports efforts to end FGM through wider programmes and multi-donor funds which address sexual and reproductive health and rights issues, including FGM. It is not possible to disaggregate the FGM-specific spend in these programmes, so the table does not reflect the entirety of DFID spend in this area.

IN £	2015	2016	2017	2018
FGM programme specific ODA Spend	£8.1 m	£10.0m	£9.4m	£5.2m
FGM spend as % of DFID ODA	0.083%	0.102%	0.093%	0.048%

■ Migrant Camps: Coronavirus

Imran Hussain:

[\[23601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to prevent the outbreak of covid-19 in refugee camps throughout the world.

Imran Hussain:

[\[23602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment his Department has made of the vulnerability of people in refugee camps to a covid-19 outbreak in refugee camps.

Imran Hussain:

[\[23603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions he has had on steps to prevent covid-19 outbreaks in refugee camps with the Governments of countries hosting those camps.

Imran Hussain: [\[23604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether there have been any cases of covid-19 in refugee camps throughout the world.

Imran Hussain: [\[23605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether his Department plans to make additional funding available to prevent covid-19 outbreaks in refugee camps throughout the world.

James Cleverly:

The Department for International Development (DFID) is supporting the UK's global efforts to combat the outbreak of COVID-19 and help the most vulnerable, including refugees in camps and settlements as well as host communities. This includes a contribution of £5 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

DFID recognises that individuals in refugee settings, including urban areas, may be vulnerable to acquiring diseases such as COVID-19 as well as facing associated protection risks. UN Resident Coordinators have been tasked by WHO to assess these risks and consider needs at country level, which will include refugee populations. UK officials are in discussion with humanitarian agencies including the UN's refugee agency, UNHCR, to ensure that such considerations are factored into evolving plans. UNHCR are not aware of any cases of COVID-19 in refugee camps at present.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[25010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what restrictions the Government has put in place in relation to arms sales to Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

All arms sales are subject to export licensing. The Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, last updated in a Written Ministerial Statement on 25 March 2014, remains the policy for assessing all licence applications.

Work to develop a revised assessment process enabling my Rt Hon Friend 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.

Until such time as these decisions are retaken, or a successful appeal against the judgment is concluded, the Government is under an obligation not to grant any new licences to export items to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen.

■ EU External Trade: Australia

Stephen Farry:

[23659]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the document entitled The Future Relationship with the EU: The UK's Approach to Negotiations, published February 2020, if he will set out details of Australia's trade relationship with the EU.

Greg Hands:

The EU has a well-developed trading relationship with Australia. Australia does not have an FTA based trading relationship with the EU, but instead has a number of mutual recognition style arrangements in a few key areas, like fellow WTO members New Zealand and the US.

The European Commission website notes: "The EU is Australia's second-biggest trade partner. The EU and Australia conduct their trade and economic relationship under the [2008 EU-Australian Partnership Framework](#) " and provides a range of additional information.

■ Overseas Trade

Martyn Day:

[25159]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to prevent UK companies from trading with areas in other countries that are under illegal occupation.

Conor Burns:

The UK Government promotes trade within a rules-based international order. The UK continues to apply EU and UN sanctions and will look to carry over existing EU sanctions at the end of the Transition Period. A list of countries against which the UK imposes such controls is available on gov.uk.

The UK also routinely updates our guidance to British businesses on the Overseas Business Risk website. We advise British businesses to consider the British Government's view when considering their investments and activities in occupied territories. The UK promotes responsible corporate behaviour by UK companies operating, or considering operating, overseas.

■ Railways: EU Countries

Gavin Newlands:

[22416]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what support his Department is providing to companies in the rail industry to export their goods to the EU.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) provides a wide range of support to companies in the rail industry exporting to the EU. Great.gov.uk provides comprehensive export guidance to businesses, including how to access export finance and insurance. DIT's Infrastructure sector team engages with the rail supply

chain to match UK capability to high value export opportunities, including through an infrastructure campaign for Europe. The department's network of international trade advisers also help UK businesses participate in export activities.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Patrick Grady: [\[25147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to negotiate a carve-out provision based on the definition by the European Public Services Union excluding (a) the NHS and (b) other public services from a trade deal with the US.

Greg Hands:

The UK's public services, including the NHS, are protected by specific carve-outs, exceptions and reservations in the trade agreements to which the UK is a party, and the UK will continue to ensure that the same rigorous protections are included in future trade agreements. Decisions about public services will continue to be made by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations, not by our trade partners.

The Government has been clear that the NHS is not, and never will be, for sale to the private sector, whether overseas or domestic and this position was reaffirmed in our negotiating objectives for a UK-US Free Trade Agreement published on 2 March 2020.

Patrick Grady: [\[25148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of protecting regulatory data exclusivity for innovative drugs in a UK-US trade deal.

Greg Hands:

The Government's objectives for US negotiations state that we will secure provisions that protect the UK's world-leading intellectual property standards and seek an effective and balanced regime which supports innovation within the pharmaceutical sector, while reflecting wider public interests such as ensuring patient access to medicines.

The Government is clear that when negotiating free trade agreements, the NHS and the price the NHS pays for medicines will not be on the table. We will not agree to measures which undermine the Government's ability to deliver our NHS manifesto commitments.

Patrick Grady: [\[25149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to protect the role of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in regulating drug prices in the event of a UK-US trade deal.

Greg Hands:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department for Health and Social Care. Questions

about NICE should be referred to my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care.

The Government has been clear that the price the NHS pays for drugs is not on the table in trade negotiations. This position was reaffirmed in our negotiating objectives for a UK-US Free Trade Agreement published on 2 March 2020.

■ UK Export Finance: Environment Protection

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[24390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March to Question 18399 on UK Export Finance: Environment Protection, how many applications for UK Export Finance support have been scrutinised by the Environmental, Social and Human Rights team in each of the past five years; and how many of those applications were rejected on environmental grounds.

Graham Stuart:

All applications which fall within the scope of UK Export Finance's (UKEF's) environmental, social and human rights (ESHR) policy are reviewed for ESHR risks and impacts

UKEF might be unable to provide support for a number of different reasons, including concern over environmental or related project matters

For example, in 2016, following a decision by ministers, UKEF turned down an application to support a coal-fired power plant in Vietnam

As a result of the presence of UKEF support, a project may meet higher ESHR standards than otherwise.

JUSTICE

■ Domestic Abuse

Jim Shannon:

[\[24350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on the effective protection of families from domestic abuse.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice, alongside our partners on this agenda at the Home Office, have engaged extensively with the devolved administrations on the development of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

The measures in the Bill relate to devolved matters in Scotland and Northern Ireland, however, with the agreement of the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice, the Bill as introduced on 3 March 2020 includes measures extending the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in Scotland and Northern Ireland to certain violent and sexual offences. The Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice have confirmed that

they will seek approval from the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly respectively for a legislative consent motion in relation to these provisions.

The matters to which the provisions of the Bill relate are not within the legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales. Nonetheless, there has also been extensive engagement with the Welsh Government, particularly over the remit of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner in Wales.

■ Marriage: Humanism

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[23549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals to legalise humanist marriages in England and Wales.

Alex Chalk:

The Government announced last June that the Law Commission will conduct a fundamental review of the law on how and where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of that review, the Government invited the Law Commission to make recommendations about how marriage by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme for all marriages that is simple, fair and consistent.

■ Non-molestation Orders

Mr Richard Holden: [\[23607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to strengthen non-molestation orders to require a police response to evidence of breaches.

Alex Chalk:

Non-molestation orders are important civil orders designed to protect victims of domestic abuse. If the perpetrator breaches an order without reasonable excuse, they will have committed a criminal offence.

We are continuously working to improve the police response to domestic abuse, including recruiting 20,000 additional police officers, delivering more training on domestic abuse to frontline officers and investing in better equipment to strengthen evidence gathering.

The Domestic Abuse Bill, reintroduced on March 3rd, also includes a provision for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will bring together the strongest elements of the existing protective order regime into a single comprehensive and flexible order.

■ Police: Driving

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[24394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on claims for compensation by police emergency drivers that are injured in the line of duty of the provisions of the Civil Liability Act 2018.

Alex Chalk:

The provisions in Part One of the Civil Liability Act (the Act) apply to the occupants of a motor vehicle whether or not they were injured in the course of their employment. An impact assessment was published following the completion of the Parliamentary passage of the Act, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-liability-bill>.

Following implementation, the Government will monitor the management information produced by the new Official Injury Claims service, including data on the impact of the measures implemented through the Act and the supplementary measures to increase the small claims limit for road traffic accident related personal injury claims.

All claimants, will be able to access the new service which will enable the effective resolution of their claim pre-court proceedings. Claimants will also be able to utilise the low cost small claims track procedure, which is designed to be accessible and uncomplicated should they need to progress their claim through the courts.

■ Sentencing**Jim Shannon:****[24348]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the judiciary on the adequacy of sentencing guidelines.

Chris Philp:

Sentencing Guidelines are developed by the independent Sentencing Council for England and Wales, in fulfilment of the statutory duty to do so.

The development of guidelines includes rigorous research and policy and legal investigation. All guidelines are subject to wide public consultation, generally over a 12-week period. Consultation will include responses from criminal justice professionals, subject matter experts, the Lord Chancellor and the Justice Select Committee of the House of Commons as part of this process.

The Council monitors and evaluates all definitive guideline, as per their statutory duty to do so. The assessment covers the operation and effect of the guideline in question.

■ Tobacco: Smuggling**Kenny MacAskill:****[21292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much money has been (a) recovered and (b) received through fines as a result of (i) court orders and (ii) other recovery and penalty mechanisms in relation to illicit tobacco in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The HMCTS Trust Statement records information relating to financial penalties imposed in the Magistrates Courts including data on the value of impositions and collections made in a financial year.

The reports used to prepare the Trust Statement do not include the offence type and hence it is not possible to identify cases relating to illicit tobacco from the available data without interrogating each individual case in the system to determine the required offence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Stormont House Agreement

Simon Hoare: [\[23535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the Answer of 28 February 2020 to Question 15056 on the Stormont House Agreement, how many days of the 100-day period in which to introduce legislation to implement the Stormont House Agreement have elapsed.

Mr Robin Walker:

The 'New Decade New Approach' deal was tabled at talks between the Northern Ireland political parties which resulted in the formation of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly on 11 January 2020. As part of 'New Decade, New Approach', the UK Government committed to introducing legislation within 100 days.

The Government is committed to introducing legislation which provides reconciliation for victims and greater certainty for veterans and will set out further detail about this legislation shortly.

TRANSPORT

■ Apprentices: Taxation

Gavin Newlands: [\[22412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on extending the apprenticeship levy to the road haulage industry.

Kelly Tolhurst:

All employers with an annual pay bill over £3 million pay the apprenticeship levy. This includes road haulage operators.

Gavin Newlands: [\[22413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the operation of the apprenticeship levy.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State has discussed with the Secretary of State for Education issues raised by the transport sector regarding the training that attracts levy funding, the creation of apprenticeship standards, the funding levels attached to them and the availability of training providers and end point assessors.

■ Biofuels: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[25170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the promotion of biofuel production in Wales.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has been in regular consultation with officials from the Welsh Government in developing our biofuels policy, including on the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) scheme. The RTFO has been successful in promoting a market for sustainable renewable fuels across the United Kingdom since 2008.

■ Buses: Disability

Stephen McPartland:

[\[22384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has received representations from representatives of the coach sector on the reasons for the low compliance by that sector with the requirement for coaches to be fully accessible by 1 January 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government supports the creation of an inclusive transport network, and ensuring that disabled and non-disabled people can travel together onboard bus and coach services is key to making this a reality.

Officials engage regularly with stakeholders and we have received a range of representations concerning the impact of the application of the Regulations and of the exemptions we have issued, including from coach operators and bus and coach industry representatives.

It is the Government's view that it is wrong to require a child to travel in a separate vehicle, segregated from their peers, simply because they are disabled. Every delay in achieving full compliance prevents disabled people from travelling with the same freedom, dignity and choice that others take for granted.

We have provided temporary exemptions to help ease the implementation of the Regulations, but once these have expired we expect all vehicles subject to the Regulations and used on home to school services to comply with them.

■ Buses: Electric Vehicles

John Spellar:

[\[25012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that new electric buses funded from the public purse will be built in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

On 10 February, the Prime Minister announced £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London. This included a commitment to at least 4,000 new zero emission buses to make greener travel the convenient option, driving forward the UK's progress on its net zero ambitions. Further details about how

that will be achieved are being developed alongside the national bus strategy, which we expect to publish later this year.

■ **Cycling: Infrastructure**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[22423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 21 January 2020 to Question 3859 on Cycling and Walking: Finance, what funding has been allocated to the £350 million cycling infrastructure fund; and whether and that fund has (a) tendered for bids and (b) received applications for funding from that fund; and whether any cycling schemes have been allocated financial support from that fund.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

No funding has yet been allocated to the new Cycle Infrastructure Fund. This will be considered as part of forthcoming fiscal events. Further details, including on matters such as the fund's eligibility criteria and application process, will be announced in due course.

■ **Delivery Services**

Gavin Newlands:

[22411]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require operators of commercial light goods vehicles to display livery identifying the (a) driver, (b) operating contractor and (c) place of business on those vehicles.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We have no plans to mandate that light goods vehicles are liveried to identify the driver, contractor or place of business. This would impose costs on small businesses and the light vehicle rental sector. It would also not be suitable for many commercial light goods vehicles, such as those used for more than one contract, driven by multiple drivers or on short term leases.

■ **Delivery Services: Conditions of Employment**

Gavin Newlands:

[22410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with officials in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on (a) employment status and (b) contract obligations of light goods vehicle drivers who are employed as contractors.

Kelly Tolhurst:

There have been no recent discussions about these specific topics.

■ Delivery Services: Insurance

Gavin Newlands:

[\[22414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Association of British Insurers on insurance cover provided to contractor drivers.

Kelly Tolhurst:

There have been no recent discussions with the Association of British Insurers on insurance cover provided to contractor drivers.

■ Delivery Services: Regulation

Gavin Newlands:

[\[22408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of (a) the National Police Chiefs' Council, (b) Police Scotland, (c) the Home Office, (d) the Scottish Government and (e) the Trades Union Congress on the regulation of unlicensed contractor delivery drivers.

Kelly Tolhurst:

All drivers are required to hold a valid licence for the type of vehicle they operate. For drivers who operate vehicles over 7.5 tonnes, an additional 35 hours of periodic training is required every 5 years to maintain their Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC). Drivers must have the full Driver CPC if they drive a lorry, bus or coach as the main part of their employment

There is no additional licencing scheme for delivery drivers beyond the driving licence. No discussions on such a scheme have taken place.

■ Delivery Services: Safety

Gavin Newlands:

[\[22409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the (a) Scottish Trades Unions Congress, (b) Trades Union Congress and (c) Health and Safety Executive on the health and safety of contractor drivers operating light goods vehicles.

Kelly Tolhurst:

There have been no recent discussions about this specific topic. The Department does hold regular working level discussions with the Health & Safety Executive.

■ Equality: Disability

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[24227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she will implement the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to reasonable adjustments and accessible transport for disabled people.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government's approach to improving disabled people's access to public transport was set out in the 2018 Inclusive Transport Strategy. A summary of the progress made in implementing the Strategy was published in July 2019. More recently, the Secretary of State has declared his ambition to go further and measures will be set out in due course.

The transport provisions in the Equality Act continue to make a significant difference to the lives of disabled people, by helping them to travel independently. The Act has helped ensure, among other things, that the great majority of buses and trains are accessible, and has prevented taxi and private hire drivers from charging passengers extra or refusing them service because they use an assistance dog or wheelchair. The Department will keep under review the possibility of commencing those sections of Part 12 of the Equality Act that are not yet in force.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: China**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[24391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March to Question 18677 on High Speed 2 Railway Line, how many meetings his Department has held with representatives from (a) China Railway Construction Corporation Limited and (b) the Chinese Government on High Speed Two in the last year.

Andrew Stephenson:

In the last year DfT have held no meetings with any representatives from the China Railway Construction Corporation Limited or the Chinese Government in relation to High Speed Rail.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Costs**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[24392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the recent cost projections of High Speed Two meet his Department's benefit-cost ratio guidelines.

Andrew Stephenson:

The forthcoming cost-benefit analysis which will inform the HS2 Phase One Full Business Case will include the recent cost projections for the project. These costs are used within the economic case and align with the department's Transport Analysis Guidance, which will also be reflected within the Business Case.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Speed Limits**Gavin Newlands:**[\[22404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the third year (a) interim and (b) final reports on the evaluation of the national HGV speed limit increase in England and Wales.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The final report of the evaluation of the national HGV speed limit increase in England and Wales (which will include Year three findings) will be published shortly. The interim reports have been published.

Large Goods Vehicles: Weight Limits**Gavin Newlands:****[22406]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing the weight limits for HGVs engaged in freight movements to and from multimodal rail terminals to 48 tonnes.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department is assessing industry proposals to increase the maximum authorised weights of HGVs involved in multi-modal journeys to 48 tonnes and hence make rail movements more competitive. There are significant environmental and economic benefits to a trial of such a proposal, but there are cost and feasibility issues related to infrastructure strengthening and road wear.

Motor Vehicles: Compressed Natural Gas**Liz Saville Roberts:****[25169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as a fuel source for light commercial vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

In July 2018 the Department for Transport published the Transport Energy Model¹. This was developed to provide an objective assessment of the relative environmental performance of the powertrain technologies and fuel choices for different vehicle types.

This assessment concluded compressed natural gas (CNG) vans are estimated to reduce CO₂ tailpipe emissions by between 6-9% compared to diesel and between 22-25% for equivalent petrol models. Tailpipe emissions of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) are estimated to be approximately equivalent to petrol models.

¹: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739462/transport-energy-model.pdf

Motor Vehicles: Liquefied Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas**Gavin Newlands:****[22407]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to support the installation of liquid (a) petroleum gas and (b) natural gas refuelling stations on the road network.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department currently has no plans to support the installation of liquid petroleum gas and natural gas refuelling stations on the road network.

Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) has a well-established refuelling network across the UK; it is reported at <https://www.fillpg.co.uk/> that there are 1,937 confirmed stations.

There is an established refuelling network for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) within the UK for HGVs, which are the only road vehicles currently utilising LNG as an alternative fuel in the UK. Industry have advised that they have plans in support of the creation of new refuelling points across the strategic road network, should demand for LNG increase.

Roads: Construction**Caroline Lucas:****[25064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the level of carbon dioxide emissions generated per lane for each mile of road expansion from road (a) construction and (b) widening schemes (i) during construction and (ii) over the anticipated lifetime of such schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

All strategic road schemes promoted by the Department go through detailed analysis as set out in its Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG). Standard methods in TAG estimate the carbon impacts of road transport over the 60-year appraisal period. Embedded carbon from construction and the carbon impacts of maintenance and operation activities are captured in the scheme costs as the market prices faced by suppliers in emissions trading sectors include the cost of carbon.

Caroline Lucas:**[25065]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of road schemes on (a) congestion, (b) induced traffic and (c) modal shift between private cars and public transport; if he will publish the details of any such studies; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

All strategic road schemes promoted by the Department go through detailed analysis as set out in its Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG). These business cases are underpinned by transport modelling that estimates changes in congestion, induced demand and modal shift when proportionate. A post-opening project evaluation (POPE) assesses whether the benefits set out in a road scheme's business case are on track to be realised through systematically evaluating metrics in relation to traffic flows, journey times, journey time reliability, safety and environmental impacts. All these are published on the Government website.

Highways England's 2019 POPE summary analysis brings together the evaluations of around 85 major road schemes that opened between 2002-2014. This shows that around 73% of the schemes evaluated achieved the objective to 'improve journey

times/reduce congestion and/or delay'. Highways England analysis of induced demand includes changes of mode, destination, trip frequency and new car trips. The POPE evidence suggests that 76% of schemes assessed did not lead to induced traffic.

The forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan will consider the transport sector as a whole and the increased contribution that all modes need to make to achieve an economy-wide net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050. We are committed to levelling up public transport connections across the country and making public transport attractive for all, from investing a record £48 billion to modernise our railways, driving forward significant improvements in performance, punctuality and reliability; to the recently announced £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for every region outside London.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[25066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the carbon emissions calculation tool data provided by construction companies building roads on behalf of Highways England between August 2015 and 2020; whether that data has been used to inform decisions on infrastructure investment; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

In 2019 Highways England published an updated version of their Carbon Tool on the government website. This was updated on the 7th October 2019.

Highways England publishes the total carbon figure from its own activities and those of its supply chain in its annual Performance Monitoring Statement. This is published on the Highways England website.

All strategic road schemes promoted by the Department go through detailed analysis as set out in its Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG), including carbon from users. Such analysis is used in scheme decision making. Embedded carbon is included within scheme appraisal, as it is included in the emissions trading system.

■ Trailers: Exhaust Emissions

Gavin Newlands:

[\[22405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on CO₂ emissions of making permanent the longer semi-trailer trial that is scheduled to end in 2027.

Rachel Maclean:

As set out in the summary report of the longer semi-trailer trial for the year 2018, published on 2 March 2020, the net emissions reduction from the trial to date is around 37,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

The extent to which these savings would be achieved outside of the current trial setting would depend on the commercial appetite for using longer semi-trailers and the regulatory regime put in place.

The future of the longer semi-trailer trial is currently under consideration.

■ Trans-European Networks

Gavin Newlands: [\[22417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives from the EU, on the maintenance of the Trans-European Transport Network after the transition period.

Rachel Maclean:

There have been no recent discussions with EU representatives on the maintenance of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) after the transition period.

■ Transport: Emergencies

Gavin Newlands: [\[22418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what powers he has to (a) suspend and (b) amend transport services in the event of a public health emergency.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State may make Regulations under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, to take measures to prevent the spread of disease or threats to public health arising from the arrival or departure of any “vessel, aircraft, train or other conveyance”. This regulation making power is sufficiently broad so as to suspend or amend transport services in the event that they pose a sufficient threat to public health or the spread of disease. Any powers relating to international travel would need to be exercised in accordance with the United Kingdom’s international obligations. The powers apply to England and Wales and the Secretary of State may make regulations which apply to England. Welsh Government Ministers may choose to make regulations applicable to Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legislative provisions.

■ Transport: Employment

Gavin Newlands: [\[22415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to promote the transport sector as a career to young women.

Chris Heaton-Harris

Improving gender balance in the sector is vital if we are to address skills challenges and support businesses to benefit from building a broader pool of talent. Building skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths is a fundamental part of this, as many jobs in the sector require these skills.

The Department for Transport is leading efforts to promote the exciting training and career opportunities in the transport sector to under-represented groups. These include:

- The Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy 2016 set stretching ambitions for apprentice starts and increasing diversity within the sector including for women to represent 20% of technology and engineering apprenticeship starts. The most

recent Annual Report 'Three Years of Progress' published on 11th July 2019 set out that:

- 15.4% of technical and engineering roles are female, making good progress to STAT's ambition of 20% and up from 3% in 2015.
- We are seeing a higher proportion of women at higher levels of training. 27% of all degree level apprenticeship starts were female in 2018/19.
- 23.6% of women undertake apprenticeships in the sector.
- An aviation programme 'Reach for the Sky' launched in October 2019, with the aim of making the aviation industry diverse, inclusive and accessible to all, with a focus on encouraging the next generation into the sector. The Department has appointed eleven 'Aviation Ambassadors', a group of outstanding aviation industry role models, who will work to inspire the next generation to take up aviation careers, champion diversity and social mobility within the industry, and develop initiatives to tackle barriers to aviation careers.
- The maritime sector has improved gender balance through the creation of a Women in Maritime Taskforce, committing maritime companies to act upon a Pledge and Charter.
- In 2017, DfT's Rail Strategic Vision set out a commitment to use franchise competitions to support a range of measures to improve diversity of the workforce including how the franchisee will attract young people into rail and address underrepresentation of women across all levels and grades. The Rail Sector Deal set out plans to improve the diversity of the sector.
- The Department for Transport led a cross-government campaign to promote engineering to young people, including under-represented groups, through 2018's successful Year of Engineering campaign. The Department now works in partnership with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Education (DfE) to support the *Engineering: Take a Closer Look* legacy campaign, aimed at 13-16 year olds. This includes promoting engineering in transport, working with schools and the Girl Guides through design challenges and production of a booklet acknowledging aspirational female engineers from the transport sector.
- The Department's Ministerial team and Permanent Secretary hosted a Women in Transport event to bring senior leaders from across industry together to tackle gender diversity issues on Monday 2nd March and drive a co-ordinated sector response to International Women's Day on 8th March 2020.

TREASURY**■ Child Tax Credit****Hywel Williams:****[25028]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when information on the two child limit policy was most recently included in leaflets sent to claimants renewing their child tax credit claim.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC provide information about this policy in leaflets which are sent to all claimants in their renewal packs and to those customers finalising their claim in year. Leaflets were last issued in the 2018/19 Tax Credit renewals packs and will again be included in 2019/20 renewal packs from April 2020 onwards.

Information is also available on GOV.UK, while Jobcentre Plus staff can advise on how the policy operates. Claimants were alerted to this policy when it was announced by the Government as part of Summer Budget 2015.

DWP and HMRC also produce annual joint reports with statistics relating to the implementation of the policy. The most recent of these was published on 31 July 2019 and can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-tax-credit-and-universal-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2019>

■ Entrepreneurs' Relief**Dr Julian Lewis:****[24991]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of making it his policy to (a) reduce and (b) abolish Entrepreneurs' Relief on (i) incentives for entrepreneurs to start and build up new businesses for ultimate profitable sale, (ii) decisions being taken by entrepreneurs to locate new businesses in the UK in preference to other countries and (iii) financial outcomes for retiring entrepreneurs.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's manifesto set out its intention to review and reform Entrepreneurs' Relief. Any changes to the tax system, including any reform of Entrepreneurs' Relief, will be set out in the Budget on 11 March.

■ Environment Protection: Taxation**Giles Watling:****[22429]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to maintain the carbon price in the next 12 months; and what assessment he has made of the effect of carbon pricing on the decarbonisation of the UK economy.

Steve Barclay:

The Government is committed to carbon pricing as a decarbonisation tool following the transition period. In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the UK will remain in the EU Emissions Trading System until 31 December 2020.

Alongside the EU ETS, the UK also applies the Carbon Price Support rate. Together, these have helped to reduce the importance of coal in the UK's energy generation mix: electricity generation from coal usage has fallen from 40% in 2012 to 5% in 2018. Further detail on carbon pricing will be set out at the Budget.

Additionally, in November 2019, HM Treasury published Terms of Reference for its review into how the transition to a net zero economy will be funded, and where the costs will fall. The review will ensure contributions are fair between households, businesses and the taxpayer, and will allow us to maximise economic growth opportunities from the transition. The review will publish its findings in Autumn 2020.

■ Financial Services Compensation Scheme**Martyn Day:**[\[23578\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the economic effect of recent increases in Financial Services Compensation Scheme levies on small businesses.

Martyn Day:[\[23580\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of changing the allocation of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme levies on businesses to reflect the relative risk associated with different business models; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is an independent non-governmental body. The FSCS carries out its compensation function within rules set by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), who are also independent from government.

The FSCS levy is set annually by the FSCS within the limits set by the FCA and PRA. It is for the FCA and PRA to consider the impact of the levies on the firms they regulate, acting in line with their statutory duties. The Government has no role in setting the levy.

The FCA regularly consults with the financial services sector regarding its fees policy. This includes the funding of the FSCS. The FCA most recently consulted on the funding of the FSCS in May 2018 as part of a three-year review of the FSCS funding model.

Dan Jarvis:[\[24356\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was assessment his Department has made of the effect of supplementary Financial Services Compensation Scheme levies on the viability of financial advisory firms.

John Glen:

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is an independent non-governmental body. The FSCS carries out its compensation function within rules set by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), who are also independent from government.

The FSCS levy is set annually by the FSCS within the limits set by the FCA and PRA. It is for the FCA and PRA to consider the impact of the levies on the firms they regulate, acting in line with their statutory duties. The Government has no role in setting the levy.

The FCA regularly consults with the financial services sector regarding its fees policy. This includes the funding of the FSCS. The FCA most recently consulted on the funding of the FSCS in May 2018 as part of a three-year review of the FSCS funding model.

Dan Jarvis:**[25100]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what guidance his Department plans to provide to firms affected by supplementary Financial Services Compensation Scheme levies.

John Glen:

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) is an independent non-governmental body. The FSCS carries out its compensation function within rules set by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), who are also independent from government.

The FSCS levy is set annually by the FSCS within the limits set by the FCA and PRA, in accordance with the levy rules and FSCS funding model as determined by the FCA and PRA. It is therefore for the FCA and PRA to consider the impact of the levies on the firms they regulate, acting in line with their statutory duties. The Government has no role in setting the levy.

The FCA regularly consults with the financial services sector regarding its fees policy. This includes the funding of the FSCS. The FCA most recently consulted on the funding of the FSCS in May 2018 as part of a three-year review of the FSCS funding model.

■ Help to Save Scheme: Scotland**John Lamont:****[23421]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people are using Help to Save in Scotland.

John Glen:

HMRC has published the number of opened Help to Save accounts registered to addresses in Scotland to end-January 2020. The following link provides the latest edition of this publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-save-statistics>

12,050 accounts had been opened and registered to addresses in Scotland to end-January 2020.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Hilary Benn:

[\[25026\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 21888 on Buildings: Insulation, if he will waive the charging of VAT on the cost of repairs to buildings with unsafe (a) HPL and (b) other types of cladding.

Jesse Norman:

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT. While the UK is in a transition period, all existing EU VAT rules and regulations continue to apply, including the standard rate of VAT applied to the removal and replacement of cladding.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Peter Kyle:

[\[25162\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to review the effectiveness of the system of small business rate relief.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to conducting a fundamental review of business rates and further information will be announced in due course.

■ Northern Rock Asset Management

Seema Malhotra:

[\[24357\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what dividends the Government has received from Northern Rock Asset Management in each of the last five years; and what recent estimate he has made of the market value of the assets of Northern Rock Asset Management.

John Glen:

NRAM Ltd is a subsidiary of UK Asset Resolution (UKAR) and does not pay dividends directly to HM Treasury. NRAM Ltd's assets are not market-traded. However, its most recent Annual Report and Accounts state that as of 31 March 2019, NRAM Ltd had total capital and reserves of £5,129 million. This is before a dividend of £2,690m was paid to UKAR in May 2019 and a further dividend of £1,950m was paid to UKAR in July 2019. NRAM has made no other dividend payments to UKAR. UKAR paid dividends of £2.7 billion to HM Treasury in 2019.

■ Overseas Companies: Iraq

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[25007\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it his Department's policy that UK businesses engaged in financial services should be able to trade with organisations in

Iraq and receive payments for their services through the UK taxation system; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Christopher Chope: [25008]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) British citizens and (b) UK companies trading with companies in Iraq are able to obtain and use UK banks for the receipt of payments from Iraq; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The government is committed to ensuring the UK continues to be a leading global financial centre – at the forefront of innovation, with a strong, resilient, and competitive financial sector, underpinned by world leading regulatory standards and open to global markets.

Where appropriate, the UN and the EU can impose targeted sanctions regimes.

There is currently an Iraq sanctions regime, with targeted assets freezes against several individuals and entities. These regimes apply to UK businesses and citizens; details of those subject to sanctions can be found on the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation Consolidated List of asset freeze targets at www.gov.uk/ofs-i.

■ Pensions: War Widows

Dr Julian Lewis: [23497]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 18425 on Pensions: War Widows, which groups other than war widows have had pensions withdrawn on (a) cohabitation and (b) remarriage.

Dr Julian Lewis: [23619]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 18428 on War Widows: War Pensions, whether it is a requirement of the estimated 265 war widows whose pensions were withdrawn on remarriage to (a) divorce and (b) divorce and remarry (i) their husband and (ii) a different person; and if he will publish the alternative methods his Department is examining to resolve this situation.

Dr Julian Lewis: [23620]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 18425 on Pensions: War Widows; if he will make an assessment of (a) the potential merits and (b) compliance with financial legislation of introducing ex gratia awards of compensation of sacrifice made to the estimated 265 war widows whose pensions were withdrawn on remarriage or cohabitation and have not been restored.

Steve Barclay:

In 2014, the Government made prospective changes to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) and War Pension Scheme (WPS). These provided that any Military Widow(er) who remarried or cohabited from 1 April 2015 onwards would retain their pension for life. There was no underlying assumption that those who had lost their pension on remarriage or cohabitation prior to these reforms should divorce or separate from their partner.

The Government currently has no plans to reinstate war widow(er)s pensions with retrospective effect. The Government's policy presumption is that changes will not be made retrospectively. This policy is the foundation for keeping public service pensions sustainable.

'Pensions for life' for surviving widow(er)s and civil partners were introduced across most public service pension schemes from the late 1990s to the late 2000s, with prospective effect. Existing members of pension schemes who were accruing pensions were usually given the option to remain on former schemes or move across to new schemes.

Survivors' pension entitlements are still subject to cessation if the survivor remarries or cohabits under the rules of many legacy public service pension schemes. Examples of such schemes are: the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme 'Classic' section, the Police Pension Scheme 1987, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, and, for members whose service ended before April 2008, the NHS Pension Scheme 1995 section and, for members whose service ended before 2007, the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

■ Personal Income

James Wild:

[\[24446\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 19979 on Personal Income, if he will make an estimate the cost to the public purse of an increase in the nationally mandated rate by the rate of inflation.

Steve Barclay:

DHSC hold policy responsibility for social care and review the social care allowances, including the Minimum Income Guarantee, annually.

■ Public Expenditure

Helen Hayes:

[\[25166\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the February 2020 report entitled Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of public spending reductions on regional (a) poverty and (b) inequality.

Steve Barclay:

Since 2010, income inequality has fallen and there are 400,000 fewer people in absolute low income. HM Treasury's distributional analysis shows the cumulative effect on household incomes of policies on welfare, tax, and public service spending measures. The latest analysis, published alongside Budget 2018, shows government policy continues to be highly redistributive. It shows that in 2019/20, the lowest income households will receive over £4 in public spending for every £1 they pay in tax on average.

This Government is committed to unleashing Britain's potential by investing in public services and infrastructure, spreading opportunity and prosperity across every region

and nation. This is why we have invested in a £3.6 billion Towns Fund, opened up a consultation on Freeports, and confirmed that we will proceed with HS2.

Further details, including updated distributional analysis, will be included in the Budget this week.

■ Wealth

Helen Hayes:

[\[25165\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the February 2020 report entitled Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On, what steps he is taking to narrow wealth differentials between the richest and poorest (a) individuals and (b) regions.

Steve Barclay:

Income inequality is lower now than it was in 2010, and the top 1% pay over 29% of income tax - higher than at any time over the last 10 years. The government has taken steps to ensure those with the broadest shoulders bear the greatest burden, including reforming dividend taxation so those with very large shareholdings pay more and taxing the capital gains that non-residents make on UK property.

This government will unleash Britain's potential by investing in public services and infrastructure, and spreading opportunity and prosperity across every region and nation. We will continue to transform the UK economy through the Budget this week and in the Comprehensive Spending Review later this year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment: Hearing Impairment

Peter Kyle:

[\[24384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support more deaf young people into employment.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government is committed to reducing the disability employment gap and seeing a million more disabled people, regardless of their disability, in work between 2017 and 2027. **The DWP has a range of programmes and support to help disabled people, including deaf people.**

These include:

- The Work and Health Programme which is designed to help people, particularly people with disabilities, who need extra tailored support to find employment. It will help 275,000 people over 5 years, including 220,000 disabled people.
- The Intensive Personalised Employment Support Programme which is a new, voluntary, contracted employment provision designed to help disabled people, who have complex needs or barriers and who want to work.

- Access to Work which offers eligible disabled people a grant of up to £59,200 per year to fund support above the level of reasonable adjustments, to ensure that their health condition or disability does not hold them back in the workplace. People who are deaf and hard of hearing are the largest group of users of Access to Work, and in 2018/19 Access to Work grants totalled £129m, of which £45.8m was in respect of this group.
- Jobcentre Plus: Our Jobcentres offer tailored support from Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisers, backed by the Personal Support Package which is a 4 year, £330 million package of employment support targeted at claimants with disabilities and health conditions.

In addition, through the **Disability Confident scheme**, we are also working with employers to change attitudes and create employment opportunities by enabling businesses to recruit and retain disabled people in their workplace. There are already over 16,500 employers signed up to Disability Confident scheme, and their number continues to grow.

■ Jobcentres: Coronavirus

Neil Gray:

[\[25116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what contingency plans her Department has made in the event of a covid-19 outbreak in job centres; and if she will make a statement.

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.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Helen Hayes:

[\[901399\]](#)

What assessment her Department 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.

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.

■ Occupational Health

Marion Fellows: [25150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to respond to the consultation, Health is everyone's business: proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss, which closed on 7 October 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 January 2020 to Question 7281 [<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7281/>].

■ Pension Credit

Bridget Phillipson: [24324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much pension credit was unclaimed in (a) Houghton and Sunderland South constituency, (b) the North East of England and (c) the UK in each of the last three years.

Guy Opperman:

It is important to highlight that in 2017/18 there were around 1.7 million Pension Credit claimants, amounting to around £5.1 billion of Pension Credit payments. The Government is committed to making sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are rightly entitled.

The information requested on the amount of Pension Credit which remains unclaimed in (a) Houghton and Sunderland South, (b) the North East of England and (c) the UK, is only available at the Great Britain level. Below are the figures on the amount of unclaimed Pension Credit within Great Britain over the past 3 years of data available.

YEAR	ESTIMATED AMOUNT UNCLAIMED (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)	RANGE (MILLIONS OF POUNDS)
2017/18	2,160	1,840 - 2,500
2016/17	2,850	2,440 - 3,300
2015/16	2,720	2,330 - 3,140

*Methodological refinements have been applied to the data for 2016/17 and 2017/18. Therefore, comparisons to previous years should be treated with caution.

Official statistics on the take-up of income-related benefits at Great Britain level, including Pension Credit, can be found in the 'Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up in 2017 to 2018' publication. Which was published on 27th February 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2017-to-2018>

Marion Fellows:

[24373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to notify each person that is eligible for pension credit.

Guy Opperman:

It is important to highlight that in 2017/18 there were around 1.7 million Pension Credit claimants, receiving around £5.1 billion of Pension Credit payments.

The Government wants to make sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are entitled. That is why on the 10 February we launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit. The aim of the campaign is to encourage those over State Pension age to check whether they're eligible. We want to make it clear that having savings, a pension or owning a home are not automatic barriers to receiving Pension Credit; as well as explaining that even a small award of Pension Credit can provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with rent, council tax reduction schemes and heating costs.

The campaign includes a short, animated video that is being shown in GP waiting rooms and in Post Offices. It is also being shown to Facebook users over State Pension age and supported by other messaging on social media. We have also made the video and campaign materials available for stakeholders to use, as we know they are often one of the first places people turn to for information about Pension Credit.

An important part of our overall strategy to promote take-up is engaging with people who may be eligible to benefits at pivotal stages, such as when they claim State Pension or Attendance Allowance or report a change in their circumstances which may mean that they could be eligible for Pension Credit.

Pension Credit is an income-related benefit, which means that entitlement to the benefit will depend on an individual's particular circumstances. It is therefore not possible to identify each person that is eligible, which is why we are encouraging people who think they may be eligible for Pension Credit to use the online Pension Credit calculator <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator> to check if they are likely to be eligible and get an estimate of what they may receive.

Grahame Morris:

[25080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will introduce a target for the uptake of pension credit to help ensure that all pensioners eligible to claim pension credit receive it.

Grahame Morris:

[25082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will commission television advertising to promote the Pension Credit: Are You Eligible? public information promotional video.

Guy Opperman:

It is important to highlight that in 2017/18 there were around 1.7 million Pension Credit claimants, receiving around £5.1 billion of Pension Credit payments.

The Government wants to make sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are entitled. That is why on the 10 February we launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit. The aim of the campaign is to encourage those over State Pension age to check whether they're eligible. We want to make it clear that having savings, a pension or owning a home are not automatic barriers to receiving Pension Credit; as well as explaining that even a small award of Pension Credit can provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with rent, council tax reduction schemes and heating costs.

The campaign includes a short, animated video that is being shown in GP waiting rooms and in Post Offices. It is also being shown to Facebook users over State Pension age and supported by other messaging on social media. We have also made the video and campaign materials available for stakeholders to use, as we know they are often one of the first places people turn to for information about Pension Credit.

Grahame Morris:

[25081]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of eligible pensioners in (a) Easington constituency and (b) the UK not in receipt of pension credit.

Guy Opperman:

It is important to highlight that in 2017/18 there were around 1.7 million Pension Credit claimants, amounting to around £5.1 billion of Pension Credit payments. The Government is committed to making sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are rightly entitled.

The information requested on the number of people eligible for Pension Credit who are not in receipt of the benefit in (a) Easington Constituency and (b) the UK, is only available at the Great Britain level. The most recent estimate of this is for the period of 2017/18.

YEAR	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ENTITLED NON-RECIPIENTS IN	
	THOUSANDS	RANGE IN THOUSANDS
2017/18	1,060	970 - 1,150

Official statistics on the take-up of income-related benefits at Great Britain level, including Pension Credit, can be found in the 'Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up in 2017 to 2018' publication.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2017-to-2018>

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[901404\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the effectiveness of personal independence payment assessors.

Justin Tomlinson:

We set our assessment providers challenging targets, we monitor performance closely and manage contracts robustly. All Health Professionals are subject to on-going quality checks to ensure they continue to deliver high quality assessments. A quality assurance audit process, following the consultation, is in place. The department is continually working alongside assessment providers to further improve the quality of assessments.

■ Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[24399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many occasions in the last (a) 12, (b) 24 and (c) 36 months Health and Safety Executive inspectors were denied full access to workplaces within prisons; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

There have not been any occasions in the last 12, 24 and 36 months where Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspectors have been denied full access to workplaces within prisons.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Neil Gray:

[\[25117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to enforce conditionality on people claiming benefits who have been affected by covid-19; and if she will make a statement.

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.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[24252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the (a) accuracy and (b) efficiency of contracted out health assessments for claimants of (i) employment and support allowance and (ii) personal independence payment with severe hidden disabilities.

Justin Tomlinson:

We continually look to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the assessment service by working closely with Providers. We are committed to ensuring individuals receive

high quality assessments as part of the suite of evidence used to decide entitlement. Providers are monitored against a range of measures, including through Independent Audit, to improve accuracy of the advice they provide.

Assessment Providers are required to ensure Health Professionals carrying out assessments have knowledge of the clinical aspects and likely functional effects of a wide range of health conditions and impairments, including hidden disabilities affecting both physical and mental health. Health Professionals are also expected to explore and consider the hidden nature of some symptoms, such as fatigue and pain, during their assessments.

Dan Carden:

[25186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12293 on Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations, when the approach to provide consistency for claimants across audio recording of work capability assessments and personal independence payment assessments will be published.

Justin Tomlinson:

Work is ongoing to develop the details of our approach and we will provide an update in due course.

■ Universal Credit

Ms Angela Eagle:

[24248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 21155 on Universal Credit, which organisation has the responsibility for setting and adjusting the rate at which a court fine is deducted from a universal credit claim.

Will Quince:

The Department's deductions policy strikes a fair balance between a claimant's need to meet their financial obligations and their ability to ensure they can meet their day-to-day needs. Deductions for court fines are based on rates provided in legislation.

HMCTS have the ultimate responsibility for setting the amount of a court fine, which the Department will then make deductions for at their request.

The rate of Universal Credit deductions for court fines is detailed in the Fines (Deduction from Income Support) Regulations 1992, Regulation 4(1B). This piece of legislation was amended to include Universal Credit and can be viewed at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2182/regulation/4>.

Since October 2019, all standard Universal Credit deductions are a maximum of 30% of a claimant's standard allowance down from 40% previously.

Ms Angela Eagle:

[24251]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made in implementing the recommendations of the Social Security Advisory Committee on alternative ways of claiming universal credit other than online.

Will Quince:

We want the application process for Universal Credit to be as quick and easy as possible to ensure that claimants receive their money at the earliest opportunity.

The Department takes seriously the need to support vulnerable claimants. Comprehensive support is available to claimants to use our digital service, however we recognise there will be occasions when people are unable to make or maintain their claim online, so telephone applications can be accepted. In these instances, information normally available through a claimant's online account will be communicated in an alternative format, which is best suited to an individual's circumstances.

Job Centre staff can refer claimants to personalised provisions which support those who find navigating technology challenging. We are currently testing a range of additional support offerings and employment provision, including more integrated health and employment support. This includes the Local Supported Employment trailblazer, which will be focusing on people with a learning disability or autism who are known to Adult Social Care, or those in touch with mental health services.

The most recent report from SSAC suggests 80% of claimants are comfortable with using the online features such as the journal, and recent interaction with stakeholders suggests a high proportion of claimants were very comfortable with claiming online.

■ **Universal Credit: Appeals**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[25114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the time it takes to (a) process and (b) decide on disputes lodged by universal credit claimants regarding their real-time information calculations.

Will Quince:

The data requested is not available.

■ **Universal Credit: Children**

Hywel Williams:

[25029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she has taken to ensure that new universal credit claimants with children are made aware of the two child limit.

Will Quince:

The Department publishes information for claimants on Universal Credit's support for a maximum of two children on GOV.UK and this can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-families-with-more-than-2-children-information-for-claimants>

Further advice can be provided to claimants through the freephone Universal Credit helpline and Jobcentres.

Providing support for a maximum of two children, or qualifying young persons in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit, ensures fairness between claimants and those taxpayers who support themselves solely through work.

We recognise that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family, which is why exceptions have been put in place to protect certain groups. On migration to Universal Credit, families' existing entitlement will be protected.

■ Universal Credit: Food Banks

Taiwo Owatemi:

[901400]

What assessment her Department has made of the effect of the roll-out of universal credit on referrals to food banks.

Will Quince:

The Department does not keep official statistics on food bank use, so no such assessment has been completed.

There are many reasons people use food banks and their growth cannot be linked to a single cause.

Some food aid providers produce statistics on the number of food parcels distributed, but the Government has no plans to require individual food banks to keep records, as this would place a significant burden on charitable organisations.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU: update**

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove): [\[HCWS153\]](#)

Negotiators from the UK and the EU met in Brussels on 2 – 5 March 2020 for the first round of negotiations on the UK-EU future relationship.

The negotiations were formally launched by the UK's Chief Negotiator, David Frost, and by the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, in a plenary session on 2 March.

The substantive discussions then took place within eleven separate negotiating groups, as agreed between the parties and as set out in the Terms of Reference [\(here\)](#). The session closed with a further plenary on 5 March.

Both sides presented their positions as set out in the EU mandate and in the document "The Future Relationship with the EU - The UK's Approach to Negotiations" (CP211). The UK's team made clear that on 1 January 2021 the UK would regain its economic and political independence in full, and that the future relationship would need to reflect that reality.

Discussions in some areas identified a degree of common understanding of the ground that future talks could cover. In other areas, notably fisheries, governance and dispute settlement, and the so-called "level playing field", there were, as expected, significant differences.

The next negotiating round will take place on 18-20 March in London. The UK expects to table a number of legal texts, including a draft FTA, beforehand.