

Daily Report

Tuesday, 10 March 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 10 March 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Agriculture: Vehicles

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[25712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of using compressed natural gas as a fuel source for agricultural vehicles.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Through the Advanced Propulsion Centre programme, BEIS is providing CNH Industrial project funding to develop an advanced engine, fuelling system and composite gas storage tanks to enable tractors to run on compressed natural gas. This technology is designed to utilise bio-methane production on farms, harnessing the bio-digestion of farm waste. This project addresses a key supply chain gap for high performance gas storage and aims to help revolutionise the farming industry and the supply of farm machinery including utility vehicles.

■ Carbon Emissions

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[24992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the Government's estimate of the cost to the UK economy of achieving the Government's target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050; whether the Government plans to maintain that target as Government policy (a) in the event that major greenhouse gas emitting countries also embark on large-scale carbon emission reductions and (b) irrespective of the steps to reduce carbon emissions other countries take; and what assessment he has made of the effect on climate change as a result of the UK achieving net zero carbon emissions under each of those two scenarios.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

[Holding answer 9 March 2020]: The UK has led the world as the first major economy to set a net zero 2050 target in law. Given the need for international action to address climate change, it is imperative that other countries similarly increase their ambition, and we are working to deliver that including through our hosting of COP26 this year. The UK will conduct a further assessment within 5 years to confirm that other countries are taking similarly ambitious action, multiplying the effect of the UK's lead and ensuring that our industries do not face unfair competition.

As part of our commitment to net zero, and in line with the recommendation of the Committee on Climate Change, HM Treasury is carrying out a review of the costs of net zero. The Government will also publish full impact assessments as we legislate for future carbon budgets.

■ Courier Services: Environmental Impact Assessment**Tulip Siddiq:** [24393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent environmental impact assessment his Department has made of the growth of the courier industry.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS publishes statistics annually on UK territorial greenhouse gas emissions. Latest statistics show, total greenhouse gas emissions from road transport were estimated to be 112.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) in 2018. It is not possible to separate out courier road transport emissions from other road transport emissions based on the statistics.

■ Heating: Carbon Emissions**Mr Richard Holden:** [25742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of CO₂ emissions from domestic heating of (a) coal and (b) oil.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory publishes an annual assessment of greenhouse gas emissions by source. It includes estimates of greenhouse gas emissions from domestic combustion of coal and oil, of which the vast majority will be used for heating. In 2018, the most recent year for which we have published data, the estimated level of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions was (a) 1.5 MtCO₂ from domestic combustion of coal and (b) 6.1 MtCO₂ from domestic combustion of oil.

■ Housing: Energy**Jackie Doyle-Price:** [24334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes are off grid.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Four million homes in Great Britain were estimated to be without mains gas in 2018; fourteen percent of all homes. These are the latest figures available.

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-national-estimates-of-households-not-connected-to-the-gas-network>

CABINET OFFICE**■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Coronavirus****Lisa Nandy:**[\[23567\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what workforce planning the Government is undertaking to prepare for a potential outbreak of covid-19.

Penny Mordaunt:

All Government departments, agencies and critical industries are actively planning and preparing for covid-19. Government workforce planning is based on a Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS), reflecting current scientific advice, to ensure the Civil Service is in the best place to respond and deliver public services.

As part of this, departments are ensuring they have appropriate arrangements in place to mitigate risks, and deliver services for the British public.

■ Foreign Investment in UK**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[25630\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the level of foreign direct investment into the UK was in (a) 2018 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 [PQ25630.pdf]

■ Former Ministers: Finance**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[25202\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding was allocated to support former senior government ministers for their continued public activities excluding security costs in the last 10 years.

Chloe Smith:

A copy of the policy and guidance on the Public Duties Cost Allowance is in the Library of the House.

Current recipients of the allowance are published in the Cabinet Office Annual Reports and Accounts, available to the public on GOV.UK. The Public Duties Cost Allowance rate is currently set at a limit of £115,000 per annum.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Scott Mann: [25161]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made on increasing involvement of small and medium sizes businesses in government procurement.

Penny Mordaunt:

Further to my answer to Oral Questions 1, 7, 13 and 17 on the 27th February 2020 ([Official Report, Vol. 672, Col. 448-449](#)), we have already introduced measures aimed at tackling barriers faced by SMEs, including ensuring that opportunities are advertised and that departments consider using contract lots to encourage SMEs to bid for government contracts.

More small suppliers than ever are looking to bid for Government business and last financial year, we spent almost £2bn more with SMEs - a total of £14.2bn, which is the highest spend ever.

■ Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Public Appointments

John Healey: [25623]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when a new panel member will be appointed to the Grenfell Tower inquiry; and what discussions he has with people affected by the Grenfell Tower fire on that appointment.

Chloe Smith:

In February, the Prime Minister, as Sponsor Minister for the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, [wrote to the Inquiry Chair](#) to confirm his intention to appoint a replacement panel member. He also confirmed that Cabinet Office officials would engage a search company to identify a shortlist of candidates.

As soon as a suitable new panel member has been identified, the Prime Minister will write to the Inquiry Chair to seek his consent to the appointment as required by the Inquiries Act. The successful candidate will be announced once the process has been completed so they start work as soon as possible.

■ Home Office: Bullying

Preet Kaur Gill: [19066]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many cases of (a) bullying and (b) harassment have been recorded against (i) managers, (ii) Ministers and (iii) Secretaries of State of his Department in each of the last five years.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [25185]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many allegations of (a) bullying and (b) harassment have been made against each Minister holding office in his Government by (i) civil servants and (ii) other Ministers, in each of the last twelve months.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given by my Rt. Hon. friend, the Member for Louth and Horncastle, to [PQ 251302](#) on 15 May 2019 and to the answer given by my Rt. Hon. friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in response to an urgent question on the 2nd March 2020 ([Official Record, Vol. 672 Col.609](#))

The annual report of the independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests sets out details of investigations undertaken by the adviser into alleged breaches of the Ministerial Code.

List of Ministerial Responsibilities**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[25034\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 21909, how many times ministerial responsibilities have changed since 11 October 2019 when the last updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities was published on GOV.UK.

Chloe Smith:

Ministerial responsibilities change for a variety of reasons, including following changes in appointments. An updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities will be published in due course.

Ministerial Policy Advisers: Recruitment**Peter Kyle:**[\[23446\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many companies were considered before Hanbury Strategy and Communications Limited were selected to recruit Government special advisors.

Peter Kyle:[\[23448\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what procurement process was undertaken before selecting Hanbury Strategy and Communications Limited to recruit Government special advisors.

Chloe Smith:

Special Advisers are appointed to assist a Minister of the Crown after being selected by that Minister personally. All appointments must be approved by the Prime Minister. This is set out in Section 15 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

Separately, and in advance of Ministerial approval in accordance with the statutory requirement, it is open to political parties to undertake activity to identify individuals that Ministers may wish to consider for selection. This is not part of the appointment by Government but rather for the political party concerned.

Previously, the existence of such opportunities has generally not been made public. Openly encouraging people to express their interest, with greater information about what the opportunities may entail, will help broaden the field of potential candidates.

DEFENCE**■ Chinook Helicopters: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what UK workshare has been negotiated for the Chinook Sustainment Programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The Chinook Capability Sustainment Programme remains in the assessment phase. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is working closely with the United States Government to explore how Britain's defence industry could benefit from this potential procurement.

While a final investment decision has not been made, the initial procurement is anticipated to provide UK employment opportunities, with the Chinook production supplier base providing potential additional orders for UK based companies. The majority of the UK workshare is likely to be within the aircraft support solutions. While these arrangements are yet to be formally agreed, initial Foreign Military Sales support will include employment of UK nationals.

The through-life support solution to provide an optimised solution for long-term sustainment of the fleet, directly leading to UK jobs, will be investigated by the MOD in due course.

■ Defence Equipment: Costs

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[23518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has put in place plans to reduce the £6 billion affordability gap over the next five years of defence equipment spending; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

The Secretary of State is taking steps to manage the financial pressures in Ministry of Defence's plans. We have subsequently reduced the shortfall in the years from 2020-21 by securing £2.2 billion extra spending for defence in the 2019 Spending Round and driving progress in our ambitious Transformation programme. We recognise that resolving the longer-term financial challenge in the Equipment Plan will be for the spending review later this year.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 18620, what the £421 million allocated to infrastructure and maintenance of the F-35 was spent on.

Jeremy Quin:

Of the £421 million spent on the Defence estate to allow for the delivery and facilitation of maintenance of the F-35B, £150 million has been spent on facilities delivered by Defence Equipment & Support, including the Integrated Test Centre, Lightning Operations Centre and the Maintenance and Finishing Facility. The remaining £271 million accounts for work and facility upgrades overseen by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, including 617 and 207 Squadron related infrastructure.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[23499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will make a decision on the number of F-35 aircraft his Department will procure.

Jeremy Quin:

Decisions on future numbers and aircraft variants will be taken at the relevant time to ensure the most appropriate capability for our Armed Forces and best value for money.

The Government is currently undertaking the deepest review of Britain's security, defence and foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. The outcome of this review will inform future procurement across the equipment spectrum.

Nigeria: Military Aid**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[25651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to expand the British Army training mission in Nigeria.

James Heappey:

There are no current plans to expand the British Army training mission in Nigeria.

Nuclear Weapons: Testing**Carol Monaghan:**[\[25689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 23 May 2019 to Question 256301, for what reasons F Med 12 and F Med 29 forms were not included in the medical records of some veterans present at the UK's nuclear testing programme.

Johnny Mercer:

To identify any such reasons would necessitate a review of individual veterans' Service medical records. This could only be achieved at disproportionate cost.

Sahel: Military Intervention**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[25650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with his French counterparts on the progress of Operation Barkhane.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence discusses a range of issues with French counterparts, including the support the UK Armed Forces provide to the French led counter-terrorist mission, Operation BARKHANE.

■ **Type 23 Frigates: Radar****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[24271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost was of refitting artisan radar for the Type 23 Frigate.

Jeremy Quin:

The contract for the Artisan System (RT997) Medium Range Radar (MRR) provides for the manufacture, installation, training and in-service support on 19 ships across five maritime platform types; including 13 Type 23 Frigates. The total contract price is £102.6 million (excluding VAT) of which the manufacture and installation element is £71.8 million (excluding VAT). While the contract does not allow for costs to be provided by specific platform type, the mean total manufacture and installation amount per ship is £3.8 million (excluding VAT).

■ **Warrior Armoured Vehicle****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[25634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department has allocated from the public purse to the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme in each year from 2012 to 2019.

Jeremy Quin:

The table below sets out the amount spent on the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme, rounded to the nearest £100:

FY2012-13	FY2013-14	FY2014-15	FY2015-16	FY2016-17	FY2017-18	FY2018-19
£40,211,600	£62,804,000	£95,671,000	£57,464,700	£69,444,300	£61,155,900	£45,192,700

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **4G: Seas and Oceans****Scott Mann:**[\[24383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to extend the range of 4G signals out to sea to increase communications with fishing vessels.

Matt Warman:

The Government announced on 9 March that it had signed the deal with the Mobile Network Operators to deliver the Shared Rural Network programme, which will see them collectively increase 4G coverage throughout the United Kingdom to 95% by end-2025. The Shared Rural Network is a programme to improve 4G coverage across the landmass of the UK, rather than offshore. As a result of the Shared Rural Network, it is possible that offshore coverage may be improved near ports or ferry routes, or adjacent to coastal population centres. This is not guaranteed, however, because exact deployment plans will be managed by the Mobile Network Operators themselves, in order for them to best deliver the coverage outcomes for the programme. Furthermore, the current 4G spectrum licenses issued by Ofcom to the Mobile Network Operators limit 4G coverage to the UK and the UK Territorial Sea (up to 12 nautical miles).

At the World Radiocommunication Conference in 2019, the UK signed an international treaty ensuring global coordination of radio spectrum frequencies. These regulations are of great importance to the international maritime community because they help minimise the likelihood of interference and allow for the unconditional operation of critical nautical safety communications. However, these regulations also impose certain measures to limit interference between countries and can therefore impact on 4G offshore coverage potential for fishing vessels.

DCMS supports improvements in maritime communications and is currently monitoring developments in alternative communications technologies that could provide better connectivity to fishing vessels, where coverage from land based systems is limited. Some vessels may already have these technologies installed for safety related requirements.

DCMS also recognises the importance of the maritime sector for the UK economy and is aware of its dependence on suitable maritime communications services. We will continue to work closely with Ofcom and other government departments to ensure the interests of this sector in telecoms are adequately considered.

■ Broadband: Northern Ireland**Jim Shannon:**[\[23521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the roll out of broadband in Northern Ireland.

Matt Warman:

The current Secretary of state has not yet met with the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss broadband in Northern Ireland. Officials in Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), part of DCMS, are in regular contact with the Northern Irish project delivery body and have a dedicated Project Director based in Belfast. I went to Northern Ireland in September for meetings with officials from the Northern Ireland Civil Service regarding broadband rollout.

Casinos: Cash Dispensing**Mr Richard Holden:****[R] [22440]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the forthcoming ban on the use of credit card transactions for online gambling, what discussions he has had with casino owners on banning credit card cash machine withdrawals on their premises.

Nigel Huddleston:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings with stakeholders on a range of issues. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the government's website at: https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?content_store_document_type=transparency&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport

Commonwealth Games 2022: Gun Sports**Jim Shannon:****[23474]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Commonwealth Games Federation's Executive Board on including shooting sports in Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham in 2022.

Nigel Huddleston:

My department has had regular conversations with the Commonwealth Games Federation regarding shooting sports and their inclusion in Birmingham 2022 from the commencement of the bid process in 2017. In August 2019, the Minister for Sport requested the Commonwealth Games Federation explore the possibility of delivering a separate Commonwealth championship event in 2022, separate from the Birmingham 2022 Games programme.

My department was pleased to see the announcement by the Commonwealth Games Federation on 24 February of a separate shooting and archery championship event to be held in Chandigarh in January 2022. This will give shooters and archers from around the Commonwealth the opportunity to compete at the highest level.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Information Officers**Tracy Brabin:****[25175]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people are employed in communications roles in his Department.

Caroline Dinenage:

41 people were employed in communications roles in DCMS on 1st March 2020.

Hotels: Internet**Scott Benton:****[23496]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make representations with his international counterparts and tourist industries overseas to

online hotel booking websites on revising their practices on (a) brand jacking, (b) fear of missing out statements, (c) undercutting partner prices and (d) the online reviewing system.

Nigel Huddleston:

I will continue to meet regularly with stakeholders across the Tourism sector to discuss a range of issues.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) previously investigated the practices of hotel booking websites, reporting its conclusions in September 2019. Following this, 25 major hotel booking sites signed up to the CMA's sector-wide principles for providing online accommodation booking services. The CMA continues to monitor compliance with consumer protection law in the sector.

■ **Lotteries: Licensing**

Mr Richard Holden:

[R] [\[23487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timeframe is for the Gambling Commission to alter the conditions attached to lottery operating licences to reflect the revised limits set out in The Gambling Act 2005 (Variation of Monetary Limits) Order 2020 laid on 20 January 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

I refer the Hon. Member to my answer to question 21948 on 6 March 2020.

■ **National Lottery**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[25203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many National Lottery tickets were sold in each (a) region and (b) constituency area in each of the last 10 years; and how much National Lottery funding was received in each (i) region and (ii) constituency area in each of those years.

Nigel Huddleston:

The current operator of the National Lottery, Camelot, publish National Lottery sales data three months in arrears broken down by game type on their [website](#). Sales data broken down to regional or constituency level is not published due to commercial sensitivities.

Information on National Lottery funding awards up to January 2018 is held on a [publicly available database](#) which allows searches to be made for good cause grants in each region and constituency within specific timeframes.

We expect to update the database with grant information from January 2018 to March 2020 later this Spring.

■ National Lottery: North East**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[25204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of any bidder for operating the National Lottery having its headquarters in the north east of England.

Nigel Huddleston:

The National Lottery is made up of several organisations working together with specific individual roles. The main organisations that make up the National Lottery are the Government, regulator, private sector operator and 12 Lottery Distributing Bodies.

Many of the the Lottery Distributing Bodies have regional offices. For example, 90% of staff at the National Lottery Community Fund, the largest distributing body, work outside Central London in regional hubs across the country. Over 30% of its staff who work in England are based in the North East.

■ Rugby: Listed Events**Tracy Brabin:** [\[25176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of including the six nations rugby union tournament in the Ofcom Code on Sports and Other Listed and Designated Events.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Rugby Six Nations tournament has been a group B event on the listed events regime since 1998. As a group B event, live coverage may be provided by a subscription television service providing that delayed coverage or extended highlights are provided by a qualifying free to air channel.

The Government is clear that the existing list works well, and strikes the right balance between retaining free-to-air sports events for the public and allowing rights holders to negotiate agreements in the best interests of their sport. The Government therefore has no intention of undertaking a review of the list, or of moving the Six Nations from the category B list to the category A list.

■ Telecommunications: Hearing Impairment**Greg Smith:** [\[24440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to encourage BT to provide functional access to (a) internet-based text, (b) captioned telephony, (c) video and (d) other modernised telephone relay services.

Matt Warman:

Ofcom, the telecoms regulator, has rules in place requiring all UK telecoms providers, not just BT, to offer text relay for calls to and from deaf or speech-impaired people. The service is free at the point of use, and disabled users are entitled to a special tariff to compensate them for the additional time taken by these calls.

In December 2019, Ofcom consulted on implementing new consumer protection rules, including a proposal to introduce video relay for emergency communications. It also proposed new requirements to ensure disabled consumers have access to information in respect of their telecoms services - for example, contracts, bills and complaints procedures - in accessible formats.

■ **Tourism: Lancashire**

Paul Maynard:

[24304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase tourism in (a) Blackpool and (b) Lancashire.

Nigel Huddleston:

The £45m Discover England Fund supports the development of multiple internationally marketed tourism products in Lancashire. These include Marketing Lancashire's campaign to encourage young adults from the Nordic region to explore the North West of England, and VisitBritain's Gateway Partnership with Manchester Airport. This promotes Manchester as an international gateway to tourist destinations in the North West, including the Lancashire coast.

The Coastal Communities Fund supported the £1m Access Fylde Coast project to improve the visitor experience for people with disabilities along the Fylde coast and in Blackpool.

■ **Voluntary Organisations: Finance**

Jim Shannon:

[23476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding from the public purse is available for volunteer groups to pay for (a) equipment and (b) heating and electricity in churches.

Nigel Huddleston:

Government supports community use of listed churches through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme which refunds VAT paid on facilities to aid greater use of the building. This includes electrical and heating works, along with kitchens and toilets. The scheme is presently funded up to £42million per annum.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is also able to support the repair and modernisation of building services and facilities in historic places of worship. Those interested in accessing the support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund can contact representatives of the Fund in their local area for guidance on how to apply.

In addition, The Taylor Review, funded to £1.8 million, is piloting new approaches to sustainability and greater community use of listed places of worship.

Government funding for open calls for direct grants to volunteer groups are also published on www.gov.uk.

■ World War II: Anniversaries**Bim Afolami:****[23409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of increasing the allocation of funding for (a) VE and (b) VJ day to be equal to that allocated to Remembrance Sunday.

Nigel Huddleston:

As for Remembrance Sunday, VE and VJ Day events are funded and delivered by a wide range of organisations. As well as central Government support for the National commemorations, local communities are delivering projects and events across the nation to commemorate both VE and VJ Day.

EDUCATION**■ Apprentices: Degrees****Preet Kaur Gill:****[23664]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprentices have (a) undergraduate and (b) master's degrees, by apprenticeship level.

Gillian Keegan:

The department does not collect robust data on the prior attainment of learners on apprenticeship programmes and whether they hold undergraduate or masters degrees.

We are committed to ensuring all apprenticeship standards deliver value for money, meet the skills needs of employers and help individuals acquire the skills they need to get ahead.

The apprenticeship funding rules require training providers to undertake an assessment of prior learning. This is to determine whether an individual needs to do an apprenticeship that lasts a minimum of 12 months and requires at least 20 per cent off-the-job training, and to ensure that every apprenticeship leads to the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and behaviours.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) is responsible for working with employer trailblazer groups to design and approve apprenticeships standards; this includes deciding which qualifications may be included in standards, and whether those qualifications should be funded by government as part of the apprenticeship.

To ensure that high-quality apprenticeships are available to learners, the Institute reviews standards on an ongoing basis. It is currently reviewing the Level 7 Senior Leader standard, which may include a MBA qualification, to ensure that it meets the current policy intent and provides value for money.

■ Care Leavers and Children in Care: Supported Housing

Tim Loughton:

[R] [\[25609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, who the members of the working group on draft quality standards for unregulated supported accommodation for children in care and leaving care are.

Vicky Ford:

As part of the public consultation on reforms to unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers, a task and finish group has been established. It is chaired by Sir Alan Wood and has been asked to:

1. Support the development and drafting of new national standards for semi-independent provision for children in care;
2. Further develop our evidence regarding the use of these placements for U16s; and
3. Advise on what should be taken account of when considering the implementation of the results of the consultation.

Those asked to attend the group represent some of those directly involved in the delivery of the proposed reforms – including providers, commissioners and inspectors as well as those who advocate for young people. This includes representatives from:

- Association of Directors of Children's Services
- Independent Children's Home Association
- Association of Chief Police Officers
- National Youth Advocacy Service
- Ofsted
- Commissioning Alliance
- Partners in Practice Local Authorities
- Local Government Association
- Providers of unregulated accommodation

Throughout the consultation we are seeking the views of as many people as possible who are affected by the proposed reforms. This group is one way of achieving that. We are continuing to work with children and young people, local authorities, social workers and providers to seek their views and discuss the proposals.

The consultation is open until 8 April 2020 and we welcome responses from anyone who wishes to contribute. The task and finish group's work, including supporting development of new minimum standards, will be informed by consultation responses and it will report after the consultation has closed.

■ Children in Care

Helen Hayes: [\[25167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked-after children that were being cared for in a friends and family foster placement on 31 March 2019 had also been in (a) an unrelated foster placement, (b) another family and friends care placement, (c) a children's home and (d) other provision for looked-after children.

Vicky Ford:

[Holding answer 9 March 2020]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 February 2020 to Question 667.

■ Children: Protection

Steve Reed: [\[25104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's annual report 2018 to 2019, published on 4 March 2020, what steps he is taking to tackle the (a) weak risk assessment and (b) poor decision making identified in that report.

Steve Reed: [\[25105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's annual report 2018 to 2019 published on 4 March 2020, what steps his Department is taking to tackle poor information exchange at critical points between agencies.

Steve Reed: [\[25107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's annual report 2018 to 2019 published on 4 March 2020, what steps his Department is taking to improve the operation of multi-agency public protection arrangements.

Steve Reed: [\[25108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's annual report 2018 to 2019 published on 4 March 2020, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that children that are home educated are effectively safeguarded.

Steve Reed: [\[25109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: annual report 2018 to 2019, published 04 March 2020, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Rapid Reviews are undertaken within the timescales set out in statutory guidance.

Steve Reed: [\[25110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation report, published by the Child Safeguarding Practice

Review Panel on 04 March 2020, what plans he has to evaluate a practice framework that can provide a comprehensive approach at the point when a child has been identified as being at risk of criminal exploitation.

Steve Reed:

[\[25111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report entitled Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation published on 4 March 2020, what plans his Department has to undertake a review of Working Together 2018.

Steve Reed:

[\[25112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation report, published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on 4 March 2020, whether he plans to take steps to improve the National Referral Mechanism for children at risk of criminal exploitation.

Steve Reed:

[\[25113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report entitled Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation: review, published on 4 March 2020, if his Department will work with the (a) Home Office, (b) Youth Justice Board, (c) Association of Directors of Children's Services and (d) police to agree a simple dataset on child criminal exploitation for local collection.

Vicky Ford:

[Holding answer 9 March 2020]: The government welcomes the 'Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation' report from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and thanks them for their detailed work and consideration. Child protection is a priority and when a child dies or faces serious harm and it is vital that lessons are learned from these tragedies. The government thanks the Panel for its recommendations and is considering carefully how to respond. In doing so, my ministerial colleagues and I will discuss the report with the Panel, and with those delivering children's social care and other interested parties.

■ Literacy: Children

Paul Holmes:

[\[24449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of e-reading in different mediums on children's literacy.

Nick Gibb:

The Department wants children to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information, whatever the format. Research suggests that reading for pleasure is more important for children's educational development than their parents' level of education. We have not undertaken research on the specific effect of e-reading, but the Department is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards – ensuring all children can read fluently and with understanding.

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 3,000 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.

■ Opportunity North East

Bridget Phillipson:

[25658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria was used to select schools included in the delivery plan for Opportunity North East.

Michelle Donelan:

We selected Ofsted 'Requires Improvement' as the criterion to be in scope for the ONE Vision schools programme, with 'Inadequate' schools included by exception. We then undertook a comprehensive review of their performance data, pupil demographics, Ofsted history, and drew on intelligence from local authorities and trusts to identify the schools' relative level of need. Schools with the greatest need were invited to participate in the programme. The ONE Strategic board ratified the final list of 28 schools.

The ambition of the ONE Vision programme, as published in the Opportunity North East delivery plan, is to support these schools to move towards 'Good' and to improve the outcomes of young people at the end of the secondary phase.

■ Schools: Discipline

Bridget Phillipson:

[25659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the use of isolation booths in schools on the (a) mental health and (b) behaviour of pupils placed in those booths for disruptive behaviour.

Nick Gibb:

The Government trusts schools to develop their own policies and strategies for managing disruptive behaviour according to their particular circumstances. To help schools develop effective strategies, the Department has produced advice for schools which covers what should be included in their behaviour policy. This advice can be viewed here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools - A guide for headteachers and School Staff.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf).

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

and safety of pupils. The guidance is available here:

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

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

■ **Special Educational Needs: Pupil Exclusions**

Julian Sturdy:

[23473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to change school exclusion guidance to strengthen the protection available to children with SEND; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

The department publishes statutory guidance on exclusion titled 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England'. This guidance covers the entirety of the exclusion process and includes specific requirements in relation to pupils with Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Schools have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against disabled pupils by excluding them from school because of their disability. Head teachers should make additional efforts to consider what extra support may be required to avoid exclusion of pupils with SEND, and as far as possible, should avoid permanently excluding pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

Our statutory guidance is clear that head teachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding permanently any pupil with an EHCP, and that early intervention to address underlying causes of disruptive behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any SEN or disability that a pupil may have. The head teacher should also consider the use of a multi-agency assessment for a pupil who demonstrates persistent disruptive behaviour. Such assessments may pick up unidentified SEN but the scope of the assessment could go further, for example, by seeking to identify mental health or family problems.

The government previously committed to revising guidance on exclusions and behaviour and we will provide an update on plans to publish revised guidance in due course.

■ **Teachers: Vacancies**

Gareth Thomas:

[23645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of teacher vacancies in the subject areas of (a) foreign languages, (b) computing, (c) science and (d) economics; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the number of unfilled or temporarily filled teacher vacancies in state-funded secondary schools by subject area is shown in Table 15 of the publication,

‘School workforce in England: November 2018’, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2018>.

Information on vacancies by subject area is not available for other school phases.

The teacher vacancy rate continues to be low at 0.3%. However, there are no great schools without great teachers, and the Government wants to ensure that teaching remains an attractive and rewarding profession. In 2019, we launched the Department’s Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy to ensure that we have enough teachers to deliver excellent teaching for every child, particularly as the economy improves, pupil numbers grow and the demand for talented graduates increases.

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy sets out our priorities to attract and retain the most talented and able teachers in the profession. This includes transforming support for early career teachers through the Early Career Framework, backed by up to £130 million in funding once fully rolled out. Early career teachers will experience improved support across their first two years of teaching once the Early Career Framework is rolled out nationally from September 2021.

The strategy sets out how the Department is developing clearer career pathways for teachers, is taking steps to support flexible working, and is helping school leaders establish more supportive school cultures with a new Ofsted framework designed to reduce teacher workload. We will also make it easier for great people to join the profession, through introducing a new one-stop application system.

In 2019, the Department launched the Teaching Vacancies service to make it easier for schools to promote vacancies. The Teaching Vacancies website is now available for all publicly funded schools in England to use. Over two-thirds of publicly funded schools in England have signed up to use this free, online service.

Last autumn, the Government set out plans to raise teachers’ starting salaries to £30,000 by September 2022, ensuring that the teacher pay offer is positioned at the top of the graduate labour market.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Welfare: Standards

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[25618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing regulations on animal welfare standards for (a) animal sanctuaries and (b) re-homing organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government greatly appreciates the valuable work that responsible animal sanctuaries and rehoming organisations do in caring for animals. Evidence provided by respondents to the consultation on banning commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens, reflected concerns about profit-driven activity and variations in welfare standards across the sector. The Government is committed to fully understanding the views of rescue and rehoming organisations themselves, and the possible impacts of introducing regulations to the sector and is currently engaging with the sector on assessing these issues. Any proposals to bring forward regulations on animal welfare standards for the sector will be subject to full public consultation.

■ Animal Welfare: Tour Operators**Tracey Crouch:**[\[25653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the animal welfare guidelines for tour operators published by ABTA in December 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

British Travel Agents (ABTA) for tour operators. I particularly welcome the guide on elephant experiences which sets out clearly what practices are acceptable and what are unacceptable. Whilst Defra has not assessed their effectiveness specifically, I am encouraged that the British travel industry recognise the importance of protecting animal welfare and of providing advice to travel providers for their suppliers and destination tourist boards.

Tourists are becoming more aware of the impact tourism can have on both the environment and on animal welfare and can expect to question whether a particular animal-related experience is both animal welfare friendly and sustainable.

■ Coal: Heating**John Healey:**[\[24244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what forms of smokeless coal will be permissible under changes proposed in the Air quality: using cleaner fuels for domestic burning consultation response, published 21 February 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

As stated in the Government Response published on 21 February, we want to see a move from bituminous coal to less polluting fuels in the domestic setting. We will facilitate this transition by only allowing the sale of smokeless coal (or anthracite) and low sulphur manufactured solid fuels for the purpose of domestic combustion.

Jackie Doyle-Price:[\[24335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of particulate emissions is generated by domestic coal burning.

Rebecca Pow:

Details on emissions of particulate matter (PM) by fuel type are not available for the latest year's emissions inventory (first published 14 February 2020). This information will be available later in the spring via the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory website. Levels and trends in annual emissions of particulate matter in the UK are available from the National Statistics on emissions of air pollutants. These can be found at the following URL:

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

Data from the previous year's inventory (published in 2019) indicate that approximately 3% of all PM_{2.5} emissions and 2% of all PM₁₀ emissions in the UK were attributed to the domestic burning of coal in 2017. This equates to 3.3 kilotons and 3.4 kilotons of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ emitted from domestic coal combustion in 2017, respectively. These figures include the burning of anthracite which is coal with a high carbon content.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[25743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the average cost or saving of switching from coal to other solid fuels, by region.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government Response to the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood was published on 21 February this year. The accompanying Impact Assessment includes a table which provides a regional, energy efficiency adjusted cost analysis for coal and smokeless fuels. This indicates that savings will be made in all the regions considered if households switch from coal to the cheapest smokeless fuel.

The Impact Assessment can be viewed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/867428/burning-wood-consult-ia.pdf

■ Dogs: Pet Travel Scheme**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[25660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to prevent the Pet Travel Scheme being used to illegally bring dogs into the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government takes the welfare of all animals seriously, and that is why we have committed to cracking down on the illegal import of dogs and puppies. This is an abhorrent trade which causes suffering to puppies and puts the health of pets and people in the UK at risk.

All dogs entering the UK must be compliant with specific documentary and health preparations intended to safeguard their welfare and the biosecurity of this country. We have one of the most rigorous pet travel checking regimes in the world and any

dogs found to be non-compliant with the Pet Travel Scheme rules may be refused entry or detained until compliant.

■ **Game: Birds**

Luke Pollard: [25736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the release of non-native gamebirds on wildlife and native birds in Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.

Luke Pollard: [25737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many non-native gamebirds were released in the UK in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available.

Luke Pollard: [25738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) guidance and (b) regulations his Department has issued to ensure that there is no detrimental effect caused by the release of non-native gamebirds on local ecology and biodiversity.

Victoria Prentis:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notification provides a key mechanism for the management of terrestrial European sites, which include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This includes a consenting process for operations listed as requiring Natural England's consent. General guidance on the consenting process is published on the GOV.UK website:

www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest

Additionally the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 include provisions to manage operations that may damage European sites.

In response to a pre-action protocol letter from Wild Justice in July 2019, last September the Government accepted that in principle the annual release of non-native gamebirds on, or affecting, SACs and SPAs is capable of constituting a "plan or project" requiring appropriate assessment within the meaning of the Habitats Directive.

Whether they will do so in any given case will depend on whether they may have a significant effect on the specific SPA or SAC in question. This will depend in turn on the nature of the activities, the features and condition of the SPA or SAC, the distance from the SPA or SAC where the activities are carried out and the possible effects of the activities. While not accepting the argument that current laws do not provide for appropriate assessment in such cases, Defra committed to undertake a review to consider the legislative arrangements around the relevant activities and whether there are ways in which their effectiveness could be improved, as announced on 11 September 2019 (www.gov.uk/government/news/defra-responds-to-wild-justice-challenge-releasing-gamebirds-on-protected-sites).

The review is looking at the following areas:

- Consenting process: in conjunction with Natural England, Defra is reviewing the effectiveness of the process around Operations Requiring Natural England's Consent on European sites in relation to gamebird release.
- Special Nature Conservation Orders (SNCOs) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017: exploring the effective use of SNCOs in relation to gamebird release, which have to date been used as a last resort option designed to limit potentially damaging operations on or near European sites.
- Legislative options: reviewing the current legislative arrangements that are of relevance to the release of non-native gamebirds on or around European sites, including considering whether any amendments to current regimes could provide further safeguards to European sites. Defra is also exploring other possible options for regulating such releases if current arrangements do not provide a solution.
- Number of gamebirds released and their impact on European sites: examining available data to establish an estimate of the number of gamebirds that are released on or around European sites in England. In terms of their impact on European sites, considering available evidence including the findings from a literature review jointly commissioned by Natural England and the British Association of Shooting and Conservation, expected to conclude in March 2020.

■ Public Footpaths

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[23538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authorities' maps are updated to identify unrecorded footpaths.

Rebecca Pow:

Local highway authorities are responsible for recording public rights of way. We are planning to reform the process for recording rights of way to make it quicker and simpler to do so, enabling the maps to be updated more easily.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Africa: Arms Trade

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[25649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Arms Trade Treaty in controlling the movement of arms in Africa.

James Cleverly:

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is the only legally binding international conventional arms control treaty. It seeks to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating the trade in conventional arms. By promoting consistent

standards and enhancing transparency, the ATT can tackle the illicit transfer of arms, including in Africa. However, the Treaty can only achieve its goal if it is fully and universally implemented. Twenty-six African states are States Parties to the ATT; the UK continues to call on states that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty. The UK strongly supports the ATT's Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF), which supports Treaty implementation. The UK has donated £311,000 to the fund and has served as a member of the VTF Selection Committee since the fund's inception.

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Jo Stevens:

[25688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Bahrain in 2019; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

Our most recent assessment was published as part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Human Rights and Democracy Report in June 2019. Bahrain remains an FCO human rights priority country, particularly because of the use of the death penalty, allegations of torture and mistreatment in detention and concerns over freedom of expression and assembly. We monitor events in Bahrain closely and continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Capital Punishment

Emily Thornberry:

[23503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British citizens have been sentenced to death abroad in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Nigel Adams:

Data regarding consular cases is published monthly on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Consular Data pages of GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-commonwealth-office-consular-data-2019#history>

■ British Nationals Abroad: Prisoners

Emily Thornberry:

[23501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British citizens are imprisoned abroad.

Nigel Adams:

Data regarding consular cases is published monthly on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Consular Data pages of GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-commonwealth-office-consular-data-2019#history>

Emily Thornberry:

[24291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many British citizens are imprisoned in countries or regions where there is an increased risk of contracting covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

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

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

■ **Syria: Russia**

Jonathan Edwards:

[25648]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his European counterparts on further sanctions against Russia as a result of that country's actions in Idlib, Syria.

James Cleverly:

Building on new Syria sanctions announced on 17 February, we have been working with European and other partners to increase international pressure to ensure that the brutal offensive conducted by Russia and the Syrian regime force in Idlib ends and a lasting ceasefire is established.

■ **Tanzania: World Food Programme**

Emily Thornberry:

[23643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Tanzanian counterparts on the recent comments made by President Magufuli that We must take advantage of their problems. They fight at home and we get the money, when referencing having won a contract to deliver maize to the UN World Food Program to feed refugees and displaced persons as a result of conflicts in areas neighbouring Tanzania.

James Duddridge:

We of course do not agree that the displacement of people is something to be taken advantage of. We do support benefit to communities through local procurement by World Food Programme and other humanitarian organisations whenever possible. Despite the comments made by President Magufuli in January 2019, we recognise the significant efforts made by Tanzania to host refugees from neighbouring countries.

The UK maintains a regular and ongoing dialogue with the Government of Tanzania on refugee issues. The High Commissioner raised conditions in refugee camps when she spoke to the President in the margins of an event on 21 January.

DFID continues to provide support to approximately 240,000 refugees in camps in Kigoma. Since 2015 DFID has provided £52 million to ensure access to food, water, shelter, education and protection as well assisting communities in areas hosting refugees. We do not channel any of our humanitarian relief through the government of Tanzania.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Ambulance Services: Staff

Conor McGinn: [\[25690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on the financial viability of career progression for ambulance service staff of the changes to unsocial hours payments as part of the 2018 NHS Pay Deal.

Conor McGinn: [\[25691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the effect on retention rates of ambulance service staff of the changes to unsocial hours payments as part of the 2018 NHS Pay Deal.

Conor McGinn: [\[25692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to financially support ambulance service staff who work a large number of unsocial hours per month in response to changes to unsocial hours payments as part of the 2018 NHS Pay Deal.

Conor McGinn: [\[25693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce barriers to career progression for ambulance service staff within NHS England.

Helen Whately:

The National Health Service trade unions agreed as part of the three-year deal that new ambulance staff would be paid unsocial hours in the same way as everyone else under the Agenda for Change contract. This is so ambulance staff have the same arrangements as, for example, nurses and midwives.

We do not anticipate an impact on retention. Existing ambulance staff were given the choice to remain on their historic unsocial hours arrangements if they did not want to move to the new arrangements in place for all other staff. The latest data available does not show any reduction in unsocial hours pay for ambulance staff.

Under Section 2 of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service, a percentage enhancement is paid on top of hours worked in unsocial hours periods, such as nights and weekends. These are the arrangements that apply to new ambulance staff and those that choose to switch to them, and mean the more unsocial hours that are worked, the higher the pay.

In 2016 a new job profile for paramedics was agreed with ambulance trade unions, allowing them to develop in to a higher pay band. Newly qualified paramedics can progress in to the higher band after two years if they meet the learning outcomes. Paramedics can be 'fast-tracked' if they can meet all the competencies in less than two years.

■ Autism: Peterborough

Paul Bristow: [\[24447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with autism in Peterborough constituency in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

Data on the number of people who have received an autism diagnosis, in each of the last five years, in the constituency area of Peterborough is not held centrally.

■ Calea: Parenteral Nutrition

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[24365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department used to approve Calea UK Ltd as the supplier of total parenteral nutrition to the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

The criteria used to approve manufacturers is set out in the "guide to good manufacturing practices" and is monitored via inspection processes performed by the Medicines Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA). If a company has met these standards, an "authorize to manufacture" is granted. If upon routine re-inspections, the manufacturing processes do not meet the acceptable standard, further actions are taken, as with the case of Calea UK Ltd.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Commercial Medicines Unit (CMU) is responsible for awarding framework agreements for England, in line with procurement regulations, for parenteral nutrition. All suppliers including Calea UK Ltd are required to provide available production capacity, satisfy quality, safety, finance and governance requirements and evidence that they hold a licence with the MHRA and meet its regulatory requirements.

■ Cancer: Young People

Jim Shannon: [\[23404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that health professionals talk to all young people with cancer about their fertility before beginning treatment for cancer.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement expects all clinicians and trusts providing cancer services for children, teenagers and young adults to comply with National

Institute for Health and Care Excellence Clinical Guidelines and Quality Standards, including those that relate to fertility preservation.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Mr Richard Holden:

[23670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment NICE has made of the potential medical benefits of cannabis-based medicinal products for treatment of chronic pain; and whether NICE is considering extending licencing of those products for that purpose.

Jo Churchill:

On 11 November 2019, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published clinical guidelines on the prescribing of cannabis-based medicinal products for people with intractable nausea and vomiting, chronic pain, spasticity and severe treatment-resistant epilepsy. The guidelines recommend that cannabis-based medicinal products are not offered to manage chronic pain in adults and that cannabidiol only be offered as part of a clinical trial. NICE recognises the lack of evidence to support the use of these medicines and recommends that further research is carried out on the clinical and cost effectiveness as an add-on treatment for persistent treatment-resistant neuropathic pain and chronic pain in adults, children and young people. Further information and the clinical guidelines are available on the NICE website at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-ng10124>

■ Cerebral Palsy

Greg Smith:

[25195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) healthcare professionals and (b) NHS England in improving data collection systems required to create a UK cerebral palsy register.

Helen Whately:

NHS England has advised that there are currently no plans to establish a national register of children with cerebral palsy. As health is a devolved matter, it would be for the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to make decisions about such registers in their respective countries.

■ Coronavirus

Lisa Nandy:

[23461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the remit of Care Quality Commission inspections of (a) General Practitioners, (b) hospitals, (c) care homes and (d) dentists will be amended to include covid-19 preparedness.

Jo Churchill:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) already assesses an organisation's preparedness for fluctuations in demand or disruption to staffing or facilities due to seasonal or other expected or unexpected events, and whether they have in place processes for the prevention and control of infection. The CQC is also placing additional focus on preparedness for COVID-19 as part of their assessments both in health and social care services.

Lisa Nandy:**[23635]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to minimise the risk of infection from covid-19 among (a) the over-60s, (b) people with (i) cardiovascular disease, (ii) diabetes, (iii) respiratory disease and (iv) cancer and (c) other high-risk groups.

Jo Churchill:

It is likely that older people and those with chronic medical conditions may be vulnerable to severe illness as a result of COVID-19, based on analysis of the data from patients diagnosed with COVID-19 in China.

Public Health England and other national organisations have published messages to the public (which includes those with chronic conditions and the over-60s) as to the best ways to protect themselves from infection, including the importance of frequent hand cleaning with soap and water or sanitiser. The public are also advised to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing and throw the tissue away immediately. The importance of not touching your mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands is also being emphasised. Information is also provided on symptoms and exposure risk factors, which are kept under review and may need to be updated as the outbreak evolves and new information becomes available.

Further information is available at the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

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

■ Coronavirus: Drugs**Stephen McPartland:****[25661]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to enable physician associates to prescribe medication in tackling the spread of covid-19.

Edward Argar:

Whilst there is no legal requirement for a profession to be regulated before it can be given prescribing responsibilities, all healthcare professions that have prescribing responsibilities in the United Kingdom are regulated. This is because prescribing is a high-risk activity.

Physicians associates (PAs) are not regulated and therefore do not have prescribing responsibilities. Work to bring PAs into regulation is underway and the Department plans to consult on draft legislation later this year.

Arrangements can be made under the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 when a disease is, or is imminently anticipated to be, a pandemic. These arrangements can set aside the usual prescribing arrangements and allow medicines to be supplied under a protocol approved by Ministers or a National Health Service body.

■ **Coronavirus: Mass Media and Social Media**

Lisa Nandy:

[23465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will take steps with (a) social media companies and (b) media outlets to ensure that the information they provide to the public on covid-19 is (i) consistent, (ii) timely, (iii) Government approved and (iv) can be accessed without a subscription.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is working with a number of social media companies. This includes Twitter – who now have a COVID-19 prompt to its search function. This function automatically directs users to the Department's Twitter page and gov.uk website when they search for #Coronavirus. The Department is also working with TikTok and a media medic to provide content on handwashing and how people can look after themselves, as well as including a search function directing people to National Health Service guidance.

The communications team within the Department are constantly in contact with all sections of the media – local, national and consumer. The Chief Medical Officer has hosted several press briefings and, along with Departmental Ministers, Public Health England senior clinical spokespeople and NHS senior leads, has undertaken many media interviews.

The Department launched a Government funded United Kingdom-wide advertising campaign on 2 February to provide clear advice to the public on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the impact on NHS services. This included public health advice on how people can protect themselves from infection. The Department updated this campaign with a new creative and new messaging which launched on 4 March. The campaign can be seen across print, digital and radio.

■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

Tulip Siddiq:

[23427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the availability of additional medical services for people self-isolating due to Covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Self isolation advice is available on the NHS Choices website and on the Government website. We also have additional support in place to minimise contact with others in reference to the arrangement of appointments. Further information is available at the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>

All medical appointments should be discussed in advance with a patient's designated medical contact, so the surgery or hospital can take steps to minimise contact with others.

■ **Diabetes: Medical Equipment**

Jim Shannon:

[23408]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisations and individuals participate in the development of formularies for blood glucose testing devices in each locality.

Jo Churchill:

Formularies are developed locally between National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups and are not set nationally. Therefore we do not hold a list or have the information requested.

■ **Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust: Finance**

Stephen Hammond:

[901438]

What recent funding he has allocated to Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Edward Argar:

Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust will benefit from £500million capital investment for a new major hospital, providing adult emergency and women and children's services in one place. A consultation on the detail of the Trust's proposals is currently underway and closes on 1 April.

The package of capital funding is part of the Government's £2.7billion Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP) for six new hospital projects to be delivered in our first phase of major hospital rebuilds (HIP1) as part of our broader commitment to build 40 new hospitals.

■ **Gender Recognition: Clinics**

Matthew Pennycook:

[23459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the average waiting time times for a full treatment pathway at each NHS gender identity clinic in England in each of the last three years.

Matthew Pennycook:

[23523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the current maximum waiting time from initial referral to a first appointment at each NHS gender identity clinic in England.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not available in the format requested.

As there is no specific pathway for gender reassignment, appointments cannot be identified.

■ General Practitioners: Training**Jim Shannon:**[\[23405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will work with Cabinet colleagues to introduce a bursary scheme for people who train as GPs and commit to a five-year tenure in local surgeries.

Jo Churchill:

We are considering a number of measures to increase the recruitment and retention of general practitioners (GPs) to deliver our manifesto commitment of 6000 more doctors in general practice, but there are no current plans to introduce a bursary scheme for all people who train as GPs to commit to a five-year tenure in general practice.

The Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme (TERS) is an initiative that offers a one-off, payment of £20,000 to GP trainees committed to working in a select number of training places in England that have been hard to recruit to for the past three years. 276 places are currently being offered as part of 2019 recruitment round. TERS has proved highly successful in attracting GP trainees to the most under-doctored areas.

Trainees receive the TERS payment once they have signed an agreement to complete the three-year placement, with no relocation option. Should a trainee leave training before completing the three-year placement, they are required to make a pro-rata repayment of the payment.

■ Gross Negligence Manslaughter and Culpable Homicide Independent Review**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[23625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the (a) findings and (b) recommendations for the Chief Coroner of the report of June 2019, Independent review of gross negligence manslaughter and culpable homicide, commissioned by the General Medical Council.

Helen Whately:

The Department supports steps towards a just, learning culture that will support patient safety and benefit healthcare professionals, patients and their families.

We welcomed Leslie Hamilton's 'Independent review of gross negligence manslaughter and culpable homicide' and are committed to bringing forward the recommendations from Sir Norman Williams' Review into Gross Negligence Manslaughter, which was published in 2018.

We are planning to consult on these legislative changes, which are being developed as part of our reforms to professional regulation, later this year.

■ Hospitals: Doctors and Nurses

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[25619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) doctors and (b) nurses have been employed in hospitals in each of the last 20 years for which figures are available.

Helen Whately:

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

Due to changes in the data collection and processing methodology, it is not possible to compare data prior to September 2009. Data from 2009 onwards relate to the HCHS workforce directly employed in National Health Service trusts and CCGs who are paid for activity. Data from 2000 to 2008 will include some staff not receiving pay for activity and some staff employed by NHS support organisations and central bodies.

The following table shows the number of doctors and nurses and health visitors in NHS trusts and CCGs as at September for each year specified, full time equivalent.

	DOCTORS	NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS
2000	62,094	229,588
2001	64,055	238,647
2002	68,260	250,648
2003	72,260	260,149
2004	78,462	268,704
2005	82,568	276,086
2006	85,975	277,387
2007	87,533	275,211
2008	91,586	281,021

The following table shows the number of doctors and nurses and health visitors in NHS trusts and CCGs as at November 2019, the latest available data and at September for each year specified, full time equivalent.

	DOCTORS	NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS
2009	95,410	278,470
2010	97,130	279,883
2011	98,389	277,047
2012	99,529	271,407
2013	101,137	274,627
2014	103,330	278,981
2015	104,498	281,474
2016	106,131	284,288
2017	109,002	283,853
2018	111,247	285,674
2019	116,416	292,934
November 2019	117,382	297,449

■ Hospitals: Parking

Robert Halfon: [\[24315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether plans for the introduction of free parking at hospitals in England for certain patient groups will include all hospital visits for people aged 25 and under with cancer.

Robert Halfon: [\[24316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the introduction of free parking at hospitals in England for certain patient groups will include hospital appointments for people with long term side effects of having had cancer as a child or young person and who may never be discharged.

Robert Halfon: [\[24317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government will take to ensure compliance with guidance on free parking at hospitals in England for certain patient groups.

Robert Halfon: [\[24318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support hospitals will receive in ensuring that hospital car parking is free for identified groups.

Robert Halfon:[\[24319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement on 27 December 2019 on the introduction of free parking at hospitals in England for certain patient groups, what the definition of long-term conditions will be; and whether that definition will include serious and life-threatening conditions for which the outcome is highly uncertain.

Robert Halfon:[\[24320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the introduction of free parking at hospitals in England for certain patient groups will include parents and carers of children and young people with serious and complex health conditions who are attending hospital on an unplanned basis.

Edward Argar:

The Government plans to offer free hospital car parking to disabled people, frequent outpatient attenders, parents of sick children staying overnight and staff working night shifts.

The Department is developing its proposals for implementing these commitments working closely with the National Health Service. This includes work to ensure that NHS organisations are supported to implement the required changes effectively.

■ Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists

Sarah Olney:[\[25718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to maintain the 18-week waiting time for referral to treatment for joint replacement surgeries.

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.

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.

■ Mental Health Services: Vacancies

Fleur Anderson:[\[901421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the level of mental health workforce vacancies on the quality of mental health services.

Helen Whately:

The transformation of mental health services would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of National Health Service staff. We recognise the scale of the challenge but we have made progress on increasing the mental health

workforce, including; addressing pensions tax concerns; increasing university clinical placements for all nursing specialities by over 5,000 more; introducing £5,000 maintenance grants for nursing students and an additional £1,000 grant for students in specialisms where we have greater workforce shortages including mental health; and bolstering the workforce through greater international recruitment.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Paediatrics

Greg Smith:

[\[25197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the development of regional multi-disciplinary centres of excellence for infants and young children with, or at risk of, neuro-developmental conditions such as cerebral palsy.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement established the Children and Young People Transformation Programme Team to take forward commitments on keeping children well, improving quality of care, integrating services, and including children and young people in all that they do.

During 2020/21 the programme team will work with local areas to develop integrated models of care for children and young people. Health and care systems will work together to achieve more joined up services that cater for the needs of children and young people across primary, secondary and specialist care; between mental health and physical health; between National Health Service public health and education; and between children, adolescent and adult services. This will include health and care for children and young people with disabilities.

■ Nurses: Recruitment

James Murray:

[\[23633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing travel and housing subsidies in order to retain and attract more registered nurses to London.

James Murray:

[\[23634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support registered nurses in London with (a) the cost of (i) housing and (ii) transport and (b) other costs of living.

James Murray:

[\[23638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to respond to the Royal College of Nursing's report entitled Living in the Red: the cost of living crisis for London's nursing workforce published on 30 January 2020.

Helen Whately:

It is the responsibility of individual employers to consider the overall reward package for their staff, including any travel and accommodation benefits.

The Agenda for Change (AfC) contract on which nurses are employed includes an additional allowance if staff work in and around London. The High Cost Area Supplement provides an additional 20% of basic salary for working in inner London and 15% in outer London. This means the starting basic pay for a nurse will be nearly £30,000 in inner London and over £28,600 in outer London and pay will be over £36,700 for nurses with at least four years' experience in inner London and over £35,000 in outer London.

The AfC contract also includes the flexibilities for employers locally to use Recruitment and Retention Premia of up to 30% of basic pay if there is a particular need.

The Homes for NHS Staff Policy aims to improve access to affordable housing for staff employed within the National Health Service by securing an offer of first refusal on affordable homes developed on land owned or being disposed by NHS estate owners. NHS trusts in London, as employing organisations, have also developed additional accommodation offers and partnerships to respond to the requirements of their staff including rental model partnerships with housing providers where appropriate.

We are aware of the Royal College of Nursing's report, we are working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and are exploring options for the next Public-Sector Land programme and key worker accommodation. This includes how we might help tackle the NHS staff housing challenge and encourage the building of more homes, including an affordable housing contribution, in developments on public land.

James Murray:

[\[23636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) retention and (b) recruitment incentives NHS employers provide to registered nurses.

Helen Whately:

The final NHS People Plan will be released in the coming months and will set out how the National Health Service will recruit and retain a well skilled workforce, including how we will improve the support that all NHS staff can expect to receive from their employer. For instance, increasing the availability of flexible working and occupational health.

■ **Optum: County Durham**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[23564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Optum has been recruited to identify rising risk groups in County Durham.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is not aware of any local National Health Service organisations in Durham who commission Optum to identify rising risk groups.

■ Pharmacy: Injuries

Jim Shannon:

[23407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the pharmacy sector on utilising the skills and knowledge of chemists to enable them to treat minor injuries and relieve pressure on GPs and A&E departments.

Jo Churchill:

In October last year the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) was launched. In the first 16 weeks, the CPCS saw over 176,000 people with minor illness referred by NHS 111 to their local community pharmacy, for quick same day-advice from a qualified health professional; relieving pressure on accident and emergency and general practitioner (GP) services. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently piloting the extension of the service to GP surgeries.

This service is part of a wider Government ambition to encourage people to think 'Pharmacy First'. The Government has set out its landmark five-year deal for community pharmacy, which was published last year following consultation with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on how to better use the skills of community pharmacists and their teams to better support patients closer to home.

■ Podiatry: Migrant Workers

Derek Thomas:

[24408]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage podiatrists from overseas to work in the NHS; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Government will be introducing a National Health Service Visa which will incorporate reduced fees and fast-tracked entry to encourage increasing numbers of overseas healthcare workers, including podiatrists, to come and work in the NHS.

In addition, the Home Office has already set up a dedicated NHS team within United Kingdom Visas and Immigration to process all visa requests for healthcare staff coming to work in the NHS.

■ Podiatry: Training

Derek Thomas:

[24409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of people training to become podiatrists; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The NHS People Plan, which will be published by the National Health Service in early 2020, will set out a clear framework for growing and sustaining a well-skilled workforce across the whole NHS.

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. Eligible students will receive at least £5,000 and an additional £1,000 for those with child dependants. In addition, eligible new students studying a specialist shortage subject including podiatry will be able to access a further £1,000. Subject to eligibility, up to a further £1,000 will be available to some new students in regions that are struggling to recruit.

These grants are on top of student loan allowances and do not need to be re-paid.

■ Prescription Drugs

Anne Marie Morris:

[23672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what processes are in place to (a) monitor, (b) assess the need for new and (c) introduce new formularies for prescription items throughout England; and which organisation is responsible for overseeing those processes.

Jo Churchill:

Formularies are developed locally between trusts and clinical commissioning groups as part of their local responsibilities.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have developed good practice guidance on developing and updating local formularies. The guidance supports developing formularies that reflect local needs, reduce variation in prescribing, and allow rapid adoption of new medicines and treatments. It also recommends that local formularies be published. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/MPG1>

Dr Luke Evans:

[R] [24442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to prevent the interruption of supply of repeat medications to patients.

Jo Churchill:

The Department understands that maintaining access to medicines is vitally important to many people in this country.

The Department's Medicine Supply team has well established processes to manage and mitigate the small number of supply problems that may arise at any one time due to manufacturing or distribution issues. The team also works on longer term strategies to ensure a more robust supply chain including the introduction of a mandatory requirement on the pharmaceutical industry to notify shortages and the restriction of certain medicines being parallel exported out of the United Kingdom.

■ Public Health: Finance

Helen Hayes:

[25711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timescale is for publication of the public health grant to local authorities for 2020-21; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the delay in publishing that grant on the future planning of sexual health services.

Jo Churchill:

The public health grant will increase in real terms in 2020/21 so local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential frontline health services including sexual health services. Individual allocations will be confirmed shortly.

■ Rare Diseases: Clinical Trials

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[24420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the future success of clinical trials for personalised medicines for the treatment of rare diseases.

Helen Whately:

The United Kingdom is one of the best places in the world to undertake clinical trials due to our world-class regulatory environment, universal National Health Service, vibrant universities and our levels of investment in research from the Government, charities and the life sciences industry.

Now we have left the European Union, we will build on our thriving clinical trials ecosystem, including for personalised medicines and rare diseases. The newly introduced Medicines and Medical Devices Bill sets out a package of revolutionary measures to get cutting-edge, personalised treatment to patients as soon as possible, demonstrating the UK's commitment to remain a world-leader in clinical trials and innovation. More information on the Bill can be found at the following link:

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/medicinesandmedicaldevices.html>

■ Social Services: Parents

Jim Shannon:

[23406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to introduce a system of tax credits for people who have young children and wish to change careers to adult social care.

Helen Whately:

There are no current plans to introduce tax credits specifically for people looking to move into the care sector, but the Government is committed to working alongside employers and stakeholders in adult social care to grow and develop the workforce, with the values and skills to deliver high quality, compassionate care.

Through our continued funding of Skills for Care, the Government provides a range of resources and practical toolkits for social care providers to help them attract, train and retain staff. Over the past two years we have also run a national recruitment campaign, designed to reduce the turnover and vacancy rate in the sector by raising the profile of adult social care, encouraging potential applicants to apply for job vacancies, and highlighting opportunities for career development and progression.

■ Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships: Prescription Drugs

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[23624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many formularies for prescription items each sustainability and transformation partnership area has.

Jo Churchill:

Formularies are developed locally between National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups and are not set nationally. Therefore we do not hold a list or have the information for each sustainability and transformation partnership.

Local areas publish terms of reference for formulary groups online, this will include membership for their local formulary group. Good practice guidance also recommends that formularies are published online.

HOME OFFICE

■ Drugs Independent Review

Grahame Morris:

[\[25654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she plans to implement the recommendations of Dame Carol Black's review of drugs; and whether she plans to establish a challenge group to monitor the implementation of those recommendations.

Priti Patel:

Dame Carol Black's review was published on 27 February 2020 and its findings were discussed at the UK Drugs Summit in Glasgow on the same day. The review provided an analysis of drug supply and demand and highlighted the importance of a further stage of the review to develop recommendations on prevention, treatment and recovery. This further review has been announced and will be underway shortly.

Action is being taken to address other findings of the review. The Prime Minister and I are driving a united government response with a new cross-Whitehall Crime and Justice Taskforce to ensure we use every lever at our disposal to fight crime.

■ Explosives and Firearms: Licensing

Tim Loughton:

[\[25614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what basis Sussex Police has instituted a mandatory requirement for anyone applying for the grant or renewal of a shotgun, firearm or explosives certificate from 1 January 2020 onwards to have their

medical declaration information verified by their GP confirming that they do not suffer from any relevant medical conditions; and what guidance her Department has published on that requirement.

Kit Malthouse:

The police are responsible for assessing the suitability of those applying for the grant or renewal of firearm, shotgun and some explosives licences, to ensure that they do not pose a danger to public safety. Consideration of an applicant's medical suitability is part of the assessment.

The Government consulted last year on the introduction of new statutory guidance to the police on their firearms licensing functions. The consultation included proposals for revised medical arrangements to ensure a more consistent approach in which forces do not grant a licence without sight of medical information from the applicant's GP. We will publish the statutory guidance in due course following consideration of the responses to the consultation.

■ **Harassment: Appeals**

Sarah Olney:

[\[25719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to create an appeals process for Police Information Notices.

Kit Malthouse:

The College of Policing issued advice on stalking or harassment crimes to police first responders in April 2019, which makes clear that Police Information Notices (PINs) will no longer be used in stalking or harassment cases.

In April and again in September 2019, Deputy Chief Constable Paul Mills, the National Police Chiefs' Council Lead on Stalking or Harassment, wrote to all Chief Constables, inviting them, if they had not done so before, to consider withdrawing PINs within their policing area with immediate effect. He also asked them, once PINs had been withdrawn, to satisfy themselves that PINs or their equivalent were not still being used by officers when responding to stalking or harassment offences. I understand that all police forces have now stopped using PINs.

As PINs were a non-legislative tool, responsibility for any appeals process against previously issued PINs sits with individual Chief Constables.

■ **Migrant Workers: NHS Trusts**

Geraint Davies:

[\[25615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a regional impact assessment on the potential effect of the proposed points-based immigration system on NHS trusts in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Government published "The UK's Points-Based System: Policy Statement" on 19 February.

To facilitate the migration of skilled workers to support our NHS, we will create a fast-track NHS visa for certain medical professionals with NHS job offers reducing their visa fees and providing support to come to the UK with their families.

In delivering on its manifesto commitments for a new points-based system, the Government has considered relevant views, evidence, and analysis. We will also keep labour market data under careful scrutiny.

■ Religious Buildings: Islam

Claudia Webbe: [23481]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many mosques have received funding from the Place of Worship Security Fund.

Victoria Atkins:

Over the first three years, the Places of Worship scheme has approved 134 grants worth approximately £1.5m to 63 churches, 49 to mosques, 5 to Hindu temples and 17 to Gurdwaras.

We received a high number of applications for the scheme in 2019/20 and will be informing successful applicants in the near future.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Greece

Dan Carden: [23468]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to provide financial support to the Greek Government for the construction of closed centres for migrants on the Greek Islands.

Chris Philp:

The UK has a strong bilateral relationship with Greece and continues to offer support and exchange expertise on effective migration management to alleviate the pressures on the islands. However, the Government has no plans to provide funds for the building of these centres.

■ Visas: Overseas Visitors

Layla Moran: [25730]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of visitor visa applications from (a) Iran, (b) Afghanistan, (c) Pakistan, (d) Bangladesh and (e) South Africa have been rejected since 2015.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on visitor visas in the.

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

Data on refusals of visit visas by nationality are published in table Vis_D02 of the

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets#entry-clearance-visas-granted-outside-the-uk>

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to year ending December 2019. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2019/list-of-tables#entry-clearance-visas>

The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on entry clearance visas.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ House of Commons: Living Wage

Justin Madders:

[25686]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many people working on the Parliamentary estate are earning less than the London living wage of £10.75 an hour.

Pete Wishart:

The House of Commons is accredited by Citizens UK as a London Living Wage Employer. Payment of the London Living Wage or the UK Living Wage is included as a condition within our Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract of all our contracts.

In addition, the terms of the accreditation licence require that contractors and sub-contractors with dedicated staff who are based on parliamentary premises are paying those staff at least the London Living Wage; and contractors and sub-contractors which provide services in relation to our contracts but who are not based on parliamentary premises are required to pay dedicated staff at least the London Living Wage, or the UK Living Wage if based outside London.

We can confirm that, to our knowledge, no directly employed or contracted workers are paid less than the London Living or the UK Living Wage.

■ House of Commons: Staff

Christine Jardine:

[25180]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the pay ranges are for House of Commons staff; and how many FTE equivalent staff are employed at each grade.

Pete Wishart:

The House operates three separate pay structures; Senior Commons Structure (SCS, in line with Senior Civil Service grades); Catering Staff; and the remaining staff of the House (A–E grades). There is a specialist pay range within the main A–E pay structure and a separate pay structure for former Metropolitan Police staff (MPS) that transferred into the House of Commons Service in April 2016.

Details of the numbers of FTE staff employed at each grade are shown in Annex A.
Details of the pay ranges are shown in Annexes B and C.

Attachments:

1. HoC-employment-by-grade-and-pay-ranges [Annex-A-C.pdf]

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Buildings: Insulation

Steve Reed: [\[25666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2020, to Question 3760, on Buildings: Insulation, what the timescale is for the publication of the report on the results of the Task 6 Testing and Task 7 Assessment; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN 3760 on 21 January 2020; the report will be published shortly.

■ Housing: Construction

John Healey: [\[24243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of additional homes delivered as a result of the Home Building Fund, by local authority.

Christopher Pincher:

The Home Building Fund provides lending through a number of vehicles including:

Directly to individual sites

Through a number of large investment funds (national)

Lending alliances (national)

Table 1, below, shows the number of homes completed in each local authority area and the proportion that are classed as additional.

Approximately 40 per cent of homes delivered through the Home Building Fund can be classed as additional supply.

The data that is provided for homes built through lending alliances and large investment funds is not provided at local authority level. Therefore, additional to the figures in the table below, a further 14,130 new homes have been built through these national vehicles. 5,652 of these homes would be classed as additional.

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

Table 1. Home Building Fund Delivery by Local Authority

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	TOTAL COMPLETED HOMES	PROPORTION CLASSED AS ADDITIONAL
ALLERDALE	106	42
Amber Valley	82	33
Ashfield	12	5
Barnsley	36	14
Barrow-in-Furness	636	254
Bassetlaw	78	31
Bedford	200	80
Birmingham	80	32
Blackburn with Darwen	176	70
Bolsover	86	34
Boston	130	52
Bracknell Forest	28	11
Bradford	392	157
Braintree	40	16
Bristol	52	21
Broxbourne	6	2
Broxtowe	104	42
Cannock Chase	30	12
Cheshire East	1,016	406
Cheshire West and Chester	828	331
Chesterfield	224	90
Chorley	20	8
Cornwall	578	231
County Durham	710	284
Coventry	126	50
Craven	348	139

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	TOTAL COMPLETED HOMES	PROPORTION CLASSED AS ADDITIONAL
ALLERDALE	106	42
Doncaster	350	140
East Hampshire	32	13
East Lindsey	14	6
East Riding of Yorkshire	340	136
Exeter	12	5
Fylde	82	33
Gravesham	10	4
Guildford	18	7
Halton	10	4
Hambleton	356	142
Harborough	14	6
Harrogate	26	10
Hartlepool	168	67
Herefordshire	20	8
High Peak	68	27
Hounslow	314	126
Huntingdonshire	244	98
Ipswich	300	120
Isle of Wight	78	31
Kingston Upon Hull	36	14
Kirklees	226	90
Lambeth	240	96
Lancaster	272	109
Leeds	258	103
Leicester	304	122

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	TOTAL COMPLETED HOMES	PROPORTION CLASSED AS ADDITIONAL
ALLERDALE	106	42
Mansfield	12	5
Mid Devon	20	8
Newcastle-under-Lyme	28	11
Newcastle upon Tyne	378	151
Northampton	28	11
North Devon	140	56
North Dorset	10	4
North East Derbyshire	106	42
North East Lincolnshire	140	56
North Lincolnshire	6	2
North Tyneside	36	14
Northumberland	274	110
North Warwickshire	14	6
North West Leicestershire	262	105
Norwich	52	21
Nottingham	42	17
Pendle	48	19
Plymouth	322	129
Preston	54	22
Redbridge	630	252
Redcar and Cleveland	28	11
Ribble Valley	24	10
Richmondshire	40	16
Rossendale	74	30
Rotherham	48	19

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	TOTAL COMPLETED HOMES	PROPORTION CLASSED AS ADDITIONAL
ALLERDALE	106	42
Rutland	276	110
Salford	1,840	736
Sandwell	344	138
Scarborough	422	169
Sefton	14	6
Sheffield	826	330
Shropshire	376	150
Southampton	256	102
South Derbyshire	132	53
South Hams	14	6
South Holland	228	91
South Kesteven	64	26
South Norfolk	15	6
South Oxfordshire	12	5
South Somerset	14	6
Staffordshire Moorlands	62	25
St. Helens	86	34
Stockton-on-Tees	520	208
Stoke-on-Trent	552	221
Sunderland	772	309
Telford and Wrekin	60	24
Torridge	12	5
Vale of White Horse	256	102
Wakefield	216	86
Warrington	40	16

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	TOTAL COMPLETED HOMES	PROPORTION CLASSED AS ADDITIONAL
ALLERDALE	106	42
Wellingborough	60	24
West Lancashire	20	8
Wigan	146	58
Winchester	200	80
Wirral	6	2
Wolverhampton	228	91

■ Parking

Elliot Colburn:

[\[23527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to update Government guidance to local authorities on local parking strategies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government does not have current plans to update guidance on on-street parking.

The Government did support a private members bill to improve the situation for motorists in relation to private parking companies. The Parking (Code of Practice) Act received Royal Assent in 2019. This Act will lead to the creation of an independent code of practice for private parking companies and a “one-stop-shop” for parking appeals.

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government laid an advisory Code of Practice for private parking companies in the House of Commons Library. On 3 November 2019, the government announced that the British Standards Institution (BSI) will write the Code in consultation with consumer and industry groups. The Government has committed to developing the final code this year, and will carry out a full public consultation, to give the parking industry, the public and other interested parties the opportunity to have a say.

■ Parking: Private Sector

Steve McCabe:

[\[23565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to tackle private parking companies operating car parks with unclear signage.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has supported a Private Members Bill to improve the situation for motorists in relation to private parking companies. The Parking (Code of Practice) Act received Royal Assent in 2019. This Act will lead to the creation of an independent Code of Practice for private parking companies and a “one-stop-shop” for parking appeals.

The Government has already proposed that the new Code should require clear signage and surface markings, and clear and accessible displays of terms and conditions. This proposal was made in the advisory Code of Practice which has been laid in the House of Commons Library.

On 3 November 2019, the Government announced that the British Standards Institution (BSI) will write the Code in consultation with consumer and industry groups. The Government has committed to developing the final code this year, and will carry out a full public consultation, to give the parking industry, the public and other interested parties the opportunity to have a say.

Until such time as the Act is implemented, private parking companies must be a member of a trade association if they wish to access DVLA data to issue parking charges to vehicle owners. The two parking trade associations have their own codes of practice and appeal procedures to which they expect their members to adhere, including setting minimum standards such as the clarity of signage.

Towns Fund**James Wild:****[R] [25739]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 March 2020 to Question 23600 on Towns Fund, what the capital expenditure was for each local authority in 2018-19.

Mr Simon Clarke:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN 23600 on 5 March 2020.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**CDC: ARM Cement****Zarah Sultana:****[23632]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, who the ARM Cement creditors are who were partially or wholly repaid following CDC Group's initial investment in the company; and what CDC Group's (a) previous and (b) current business or investment relationships are with each of those creditors.

James Duddridge:

Financial creditors of ARM Cement Limited who were partially or wholly repaid following CDC Group's investment were: Citibank N.A.; I&M Bank Ltd; Bank of Africa

Kenya Ltd; Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank; Development Bank of South Africa; Guaranty Trust Bank Kenya Ltd; Aureos Capital; Chase Bank Ltd; Barclays Bank of Kenya; CfC Stanbic Bank Ltd; Victoria Commercial Bank; Africa Finance Corporation.

Information on CDC's current investment relationships with the above investees, where applicable, are available on its website <https://www.cdcgroup.com/en/our-investments/>

■ Developing Countries: Human Trafficking

Preet Kaur Gill:

[23502]

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, for what reasons her Department took the decision not to collate disaggregated data on adolescence age.

James Cleverly:

The programme works with vulnerable children and young people and there are ethical and data protection considerations that need to be addressed before we can disaggregate to this level. 'Children on the Move' will provide a final figure of adolescent girls reached at the end of the programme (December 2020). Figures will be primarily based on children who receive case management, the most reliable tool to capture such data.

The programme is also undertaking multi-country research on the drivers of migration for boys and girls, including the risks they face along the way. This is using both qualitative and quantitative data. Once completed, the research will supplement the learning on how, and how many, adolescent girls are at child protection risks due to migration.

■ Developing Countries: Living Wage

Catherine West:

[23460]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department plans to make the living income a priority of its Economic Development Strategy.

James Duddridge:

Supporting the conditions for the creation of quality jobs and raising the incomes of the world's poorest workers is at the heart of DFID's Economic Development Strategy. Since 2015, DFID has supported over 3.9 million people to have raised incomes and better jobs or livelihoods to work their way out of poverty and deliver safer, more secure and higher-return work for women. DFID is also one of the founding members of the Living Income Community of Practice, which aims to increase the incomes of smallholder farmers and enable them to achieve a decent standard of living.

■ Forests

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[23462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions her Department has had with representatives of the business sector on the elimination of deforestation from business supply chains as set out in the Amsterdam Declaration on Deforestation.

James Duddridge:

The UK supports a number of initiatives which facilitate engagement, dialogue and collaboration with companies to eliminate deforestation from supply chains, in line with the aims of the Amsterdam Declarations.

This includes business roundtables to help UK companies realise sustainable sourcing commitments for palm oil and soya; the Tropical Forest Alliance, a public-private initiative with over 160 members, hosted by the World Economic Forum, which is working to help companies realise commitments to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains for palm oil, soya, beef and paper & board; and support to the Cocoa and Forests Initiative, which works with the global cocoa and chocolate industries to eliminate deforestation from the cocoa supply chain.

This collaboration is helping to accelerate the implementation of new industry norms and practices for sustainability, but further work is required to ensure that these are taken up broadly across global agricultural commodity supply chains.

■ Forests: Business

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[23463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment her Department has made of its progress on eliminating deforestation from business supply chains as set out in the Amsterdam Declaration on Deforestation.

James Duddridge:

Supporting trade in sustainable commodities is a key focus of DFID's approach to tackling climate change. Partnerships for Forests (£104 million, 2015 - 2023) has been established to accelerate private sector commitments to eliminate deforestation from supply chains.

The programme is working at all levels of supply chains for cocoa, palm oil, rubber and soya, to build stronger demand for sustainable commodities, develop new industry sustainability standards, and test new and sustainable ways of growing commodities without causing deforestation.

This is helping to establish new industry norms and practices, but further work is required to ensure that these are taken up broadly across global agricultural commodity supply chains.

■ Hospital Ships

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, where the proposed hospital ship will operate from.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what capability gap has been identified to support the decision to construct a hospital ship.

Luke Pollard: [\[24429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with Secretary of State for Defence on the construction and operation of a UK hospital ship.

James Cleverly:

DFID and the MoD already work closely together to respond to humanitarian emergencies. For example, following Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas last September, RFA Mounts Bay played a critical role in the UK response.

As set out in the UK Humanitarian Reform Plan, the UK Government is committed ensuring a bigger, better, faster response capability which is able to respond to a range of different natural disasters. This includes a continued commitment to use our military assets to deliver humanitarian aid whenever appropriate, in accordance with UN guidelines.

No decision has been made on the construction or operation of a UK hospital ship, and we will continue to ensure that UKaid is deployed in a way that maximises value for money for development and the UK taxpayer.

■ Private Infrastructure Development Group: Fossil Fuels

Tulip Siddiq: [\[23452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February to Question 14010 on Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG): Fossil Fuels, how many Environmental and Social Impact Assessments were conducted by PIDG in each of the past 10 years; and how many projects were not approved on environmental grounds.

James Duddridge:

Private Investment Development Group (PIDG) complies with international best practice standards and PIDG companies complete an Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessment for each project in which they invest, before approving any such investment.

Each investment must comply with PIDG's Environment, Social, Health and Safety standards, which are based on the internationally recognised International Finance Corporation Environment and Social Performance Standards. DFID monitors compliance with these policies as part of its ongoing role as a PIDG Owner.

PIDG does not hold data on projects specifically rejected on the grounds of environmental concerns.

The Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) prioritises investments in renewables wherever possible. PIDG does not have any active fossil fuel extraction projects, and PIDG's strategy rules out any investments in coal.

Data on all PIDG investment commitments are available online via its Results Monitoring Database and its annual reports (<https://www.pidg.org/>). DFID also publishes data relating to its funding to PIDG via DevTracker.

Tulip Siddiq:

[23453]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 28 February to Question 18834 on Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG): Fossil Fuels, how much funding was provided by the PIDG to (a) the 32 fossil fuel related infrastructure projects (b) the 35 renewable power projects.

James Duddridge:

The value of Private Investment Development Group (PIDG) commitments to energy projects disaggregated by renewables and non-renewables is published in the PIDG Annual Review, which is available publicly online.

You can find it the 2018 annual review at: https://www.pidg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PIDG_2018_Annual_Review_MAY2019_Final_Digital-4.pdf

■ Syria: Coronavirus

Dan Carden:

[24419]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the international community is taking to help stop the spread of covid-19 to refugee camps in north west Syria and elsewhere in the region.

James Cleverly:

There are no known cases of COVID-19 in refugee camps at present in North West Syria and elsewhere in the region.

DFID recognises that individuals in refugee camps are more vulnerable to COVID-19. In Syria, the international community is taking steps to help stop the virus spreading. On 1 March, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator released US \$15 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to help fund global efforts to contain the virus in Syria. The funding, which will be allocated to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, will go towards monitoring the spread of the virus, investigating cases and the operation of national laboratories.

DFID is closely monitoring the situation and looking at specific support we could provide to existing partners. In Syria and the region, our healthcare funding through the WHO provides medicine and equipment to hospitals and health centres, including in IDP camps, as well as training of healthcare staff. DFID support also assists health systems strengthening, enabling real-time decision making in improving the health response and preventing mass outbreaks of disease.

Globally, the UK is continuing to support efforts to combat the outbreak of COVID-19. We have provided £40 million investment into vaccine and virus research, and £5 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO). We are working with other countries to use forums such as the G7 presidency to focus international efforts in support of the WHO led response.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid

Dan Carden:

[\[24417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with Kevin Kennedy, the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis; and what requests for support she has received from Mr Kennedy.

James Cleverly:

DFID officials speak regularly with Kevin Kennedy and his team. Most recently they discussed the updated UN Readiness and Response Plan, requesting \$500 million from the international community to support the emergency response in Idlib. DFID has contributed to that response.

On 3 March the Secretary of State announced an additional £89 million of humanitarian aid to Syria, including £15 million specifically for Idlib. This will deliver emergency support such as medical items, clean water and shelter, in addition to evacuating medical staff and civilians from unsafe areas where military forces are advancing.

Dan Carden:

[\[24418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with Filippo Grandi, the UN high Commissioner for Refugees, on the humanitarian needs of people displaced by fighting in the Idlib area of north west Syria.

James Cleverly:

DFID officials are in regular contact with UNHCR counterparts.

The UK is deeply concerned that over 950,000 Syrians have been displaced by the violence in Idlib since 1 December, with over 80% being women and children. On 3 March, the Secretary of State announced an additional £89 million of humanitarian aid to Syria, including £15 million specifically for Idlib. This will deliver emergency support such as medical items, clean water and shelter, in addition to evacuating medical staff and civilians from unsafe areas where military forces are advancing.

■ UK-Africa Investment Summit

Caroline Lucas:

[\[25067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2020 to Question 4779 on UK Africa Investment Summit, if she will publish the amount of funding allocated from Official Development Assistance to cover the costs of the UK Africa Investment Summit 2020 by the Easter 2020 recess.

James Duddridge:

It is the government's intention to publish full details of the costs of the UK-Africa Investment Summit. They will be published as part of the Department for International Development's annual accounts in July, 2020.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Imports: Sanctions****Martyn Day:**[\[25704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will make it his policy that the UK will not allow goods to be imported to the UK from countries who produce goods illegally in the (a) Palestinian Occupied Territories and (b) other territories under military occupation after the end of the transition period.

Conor Burns:

The UK does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including the settlements, as part of Israel. We are committed to maintaining our current approach on this issue. The Government does not believe that any form of anti-Israeli boycott would support the peace process.

The UK strongly supports the principle of free trade and the rule of law. The UK prohibits the importation of goods from certain countries including in accordance with its obligations under EU and multilateral sanctions regimes. A list of countries against which the UK currently imposes such import controls is available on gov.uk.

JUSTICE■ **Coroners****Jessica Morden:**[\[25635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time taken to process a coroner's inquest was in weeks in (a) Gwent, (b) Wales and (c) England and Wales in each year from 2010-2019.

Jessica Morden:[\[25636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for coroners' inquests.

Alex Chalk:

The requested information for 2010-2018 is set out in the attached table. It is taken from the Coroner Statistics Annual which is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coroners-and-burials-statistics>

Information for 2019 is not yet available.

Clearly, unnecessary delay between death and inquest may cause additional anguish and distress to the relatives and friends of the deceased. For this reason, the

Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013 require that an inquest must be completed within six months of the coroner being made aware of a death or as soon as is reasonably practicable after that date. The Chief Coroner has published advice for coroners to reinforce these requirements which indicates that, if there is to be a delay of over six months, a coroner should ensure that a Pre-Inquest Review hearing is held.

Coroners are also under a statutory duty to report to the Chief Coroner any inquest which is not concluded within twelve months.

The Chief Coroner undertakes regular training with all coroners on a number of issues, including the timeliness of inquests and the investigation process.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ25635.xlsx]

■ **National Probation Service for England and Wales: Bermondsey and Old Southwark**

Neil Coyle:

[\[23554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the timetable is for the relocation of the Probation Service Offices on Harper Road in Bermondsey and Old Southwark constituency.

Lucy Frazer:

The National Probation Service (NPS) occupies 21 Harper Road on a leasehold basis and the tenancy is due to expire in 2059. We understand the proposed redevelopment of the area will provide valuable employment and the department has been exploring options for relocating staff currently in situ to other offices while keeping any disruption to a minimum. We expect to be able to recommence discussions shortly with the landlord regarding the lease and the Probation Service's office at 21 Harper Road.

■ **Prison Officers: Resignations**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[24398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the resignation rate for (a) Band 3, (b) Band 4, and (c) Band 5 prison officers was at each prison in each of the last five years.

Lucy Frazer:

The attached table provides the nationally compiled resignation statistics for staff at Band 3, 4 and 5 since 2015.

Resignation rates by prison by individual grade is not published.

We have recruited a huge number of prison officers with some 4,200 more on the landings than three years ago.

Annual fluctuations are expected, but we work hard to retain our staff – giving them the biggest pay rise in a decade, additional training, tools like PAVA and body-worn cameras to make their jobs safer.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of Attachment to accompany PQ 24398.xlsx]

■ **Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety**

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[24395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 1936, Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety, what the timeframe is for the completion of the configuration to enable online recording from remote locations.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[24396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 1936, Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety, at what remote locations an intranet connection is available.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[24397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2020 to Question 1936, Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety, whether non-directly employed workers will have access to online recording from remote locations.

Lucy Frazer:

We are currently considering the possibility of allowing reporting via internet enabled mobile devices and any device with a web connection. If fully implemented this will mean that intranet connected hardware would not be required. In order to assess the viability of wider implementation remote/mobile reporting capability will be piloted in two probation divisions this Spring.

Systems are already in place to enable non-directly employed workers access reporting and recording. The use of the proposed online system for this purpose will also be considered in the review of this pilot.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Belfast Agreement and European Convention On Human Rights**

Stephen Farry: [\[23658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans the Government has for (a) UK participation in the European Convention on Human Rights and (b) maintenance of the Good Friday Agreement after the transition period.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government is committed to the European Convention of Human Rights and to protecting human rights and championing them at home and abroad. The Government is also firmly committed to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, its

successor agreements, the constitutional principles it upholds, the institutions it established, and the rights it protects; leaving the EU does not change this position.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Noise

Philip Dunne:

[\[23470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what statutory protections Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty receive against aircraft noise.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The airspace issues surrounding National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) were considered in the department's airspace and noise project. The outcome of this work was reflected in the Air Navigation Guidance 2017, which the department issued to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in October 2017.

The guidance requires the CAA to have regard to the statutory purposes of National Parks and AONB when considering proposals for airspace changes. When airspace changes are being considered, it is important that local circumstances, including community views on specific areas that should be avoided, are taken into account where possible. However, given the finite amount of airspace available, it will not always be possible to avoid overflying National Parks or AONB.

■ Biofuels: Aviation

Paul Maynard:

[\[23479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on sustainable jet fuels in decarbonising aviation; and what assessment he has made of the potential for sustainable jet fuels to create green jobs.

Paul Maynard:

[\[23484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding was allocated to research on sustainable aviation fuels in the last five years.

Rachel Maclean:

To reduce the carbon emissions from aviation, the Government supports a range of measures, including efficiency improvements in technology, operations and air traffic management, use of sustainable aviation fuels and market based measures.

The Government is encouraging the production and use of sustainable alternative aviation fuels in the UK. The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) rewards renewable aviation fuels in the form of tradeable certificates. Since 2015, £11.5m of government money has been invested in the research and development of low carbon fuels, with £1.8m of this being for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). SAF has received less research and development funding than other areas of aviation because the technology to produce SAF already exists.

Additionally, the Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition (the F4C) makes up to £20 million of capital funding available to projects that will produce low carbon waste-based fuels to be used in aeroplanes and lorries. Analysis commissioned by the Department for the F4C suggests that the competition could stimulate up to 9,800 jobs by 2030, of which some will be involved in the SAF industry.

The Government is considering policies it can put in place to further assist the long-term uptake of sustainable aviation fuels. The upcoming aviation consultation on reaching net zero in the aviation sector will provide an opportunity to test such further policies.

■ Bridges: Irish Sea

Simon Hoare: [\[23536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Government officials are working on the project related to the construction of a bridge between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Simon Hoare: [\[23537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has employed (a) consultants and (b) engineers to work on the project related to the construction of a bridge between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The government is committed to upgrading our infrastructure, and officials are looking at a range of options to level up the country and support growth and productivity in every region.

We will set out more details on our plans to increase investment in infrastructure later this year.

■ Electric Vehicles: Grants

John Lamont: [\[23419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many plug-in car grants have been (a) issued and at (b) at what financial value in (i) the Scottish Borders, (ii) Scotland and (iii) the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department holds data on plug-in car grants, however this database does not provide the geographic breakdown requested.

Up to the end of September 2019, the number of plug-in car grant eligible models registered for the first time and their estimated total financial value are outlined below:

AREA OF REGISTRATION	(A) NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS FOR ELIGIBLE MODELS	(B) ESTIMATED FINANCIAL VALUE 1
(i) Scottish Borders Unitary	205	£0.8 million

AREA OF REGISTRATION	(A) NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS FOR ELIGIBLE MODELS	(B) ESTIMATED FINANCIAL VALUE 1
Authority		
(ii) Scotland	10,561	£40 million
(iii) UK	202,048	£756 million

¹ Estimated from vehicle registration data by applying amount of available grant for eligible models at the time of registration. This estimate does not mean that every vehicle registered received the grant or that other vehicles did not receive the grant before the end of September 2019 but had not registered the vehicle yet.

■ Flybe: Bankruptcy

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[25669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effect of Flybe entering administration on the provision of air freight at each airport in the UK.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Our preliminary assessment is that Flybe entering administration will have a minimal impact on the provision of air freight but we will keep this under review.

Colum Eastwood:

[\[25746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support he plans provide to Belfast City Airport to help ensure that vacant routes are filled by other airlines following the collapse of Flybe.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We are urgently working with industry to identify opportunities to re-establish key Flybe routes throughout the UK, and have kept in close contact with airlines and airports over the last few days to emphasise this. We are pleased to see that a number of airlines have already committed to operating many of these routes in the near future, including from Belfast City Airport.

■ Light Rail Safety and Standards Board: Finance

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[25655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding he plans to allocate to the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board in each of the next five years.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[25656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last met with the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board to discuss progress in implementing improvements to safety on UK light rail systems.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport has met with the Light Rail Standards and Safety Board to discuss their work programme following the Rail Investigation Accident Board report into the Sandilands tram accident. This included a discussion at the UK Tram annual conference in September last year.

The Department has provided over £1.8 million to help the Board take forward safety of light rail systems and is shortly to provide a further £1.5 million in this regard. Further funding for future years will be determined following the next Spending Review. It is also expected the sector provide funding in parallel to ensure the safety of the systems they operate.

Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[25714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 20599, what steps he is taking to promote the adoption of hydrogen in the haulage industry.

Rachel Maclean:

Hydrogen fuel cell technology could play a role in supporting the transition to zero emissions transport, as long as it is produced in a sustainable way. The £23 million Hydrogen for Transport programme will support the rollout of hydrogen refuelling infrastructure, which is expected to help reduce barriers to the deployment of hydrogen heavy duty vehicles.

The Government is also supporting the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's Decarbonising Transport Networks+, which are removing barriers to low carbon transport. This includes a hydrogen trial and a decarbonisation of freight trial. Furthermore, the £20 million government Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial, which concludes this year, includes lorries running on hydrogen dual-fuel.

Railways: Public Opinion**Grahame Morris:**[\[24314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the oral evidence of 28 October 2019 to the Transport Committee, Qq42-44, if he will publish the evidence on passenger views of public ownership which has informed the ongoing Williams rail review.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In April 2019, the Williams Rail Review published 'Trust in the Rail Sector', a research report into passenger views on the rail sector. This is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/797926/trust-in-the-rail-sector.pdf.

Further research will be published alongside the White Paper based on the Review's recommendations.

■ Railways: Suicide

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[25657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Office of Rail and Road, (b) Network Rail and (c) Train Operating Companies on suicide prevention.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Regular and on-going communication takes place between the Department and all agencies that have a role to play in safeguarding the vulnerable. There is concerted activity by the rail industry to manage the risk and put in place suicide prevention strategies.

DfT has a leadership role across the industry and drives a variety of regular meetings and working groups. In addition to the work of the National Suicide Prevention Working Group, the department chairs a regular working group meeting (DfT and aligned agencies suicide prevention meeting) that is attended by Network Rail, TfL, and the wider transport sector. This group now meet regularly to share good practice, update on activity and look for shared opportunities for suicide prevention initiatives.

A specific example of a forthcoming workshop is the Suicide Prevention (Dissuasion) Workshop being held on 26 March 2020 which will bring together Network Rail, Transport for London, Train Operators, the ORR, and the wider transport sector, to promote new thinking and developments in the prevention arena.

■ Regional Airports

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[25667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Government plans to publish the terms of reference for the urgent review into regional connectivity.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Levelling up connectivity across our regions and nations is a top priority for this Government. Our review of regional air connectivity will ensure the UK has the domestic transport connections local communities need. We will publish the terms of reference shortly.

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[25668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the (a) nations and (b) regions of the UK have access to air connections.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We are urgently working with industry to identify opportunities to re-establish key Flybe routes throughout the nations and regions of the UK, and have kept in close contact with airlines and airports over the last few days to emphasise this. We are pleased to see that a number of airlines have already committed to operating many of these routes in the near future.

In addition to this immediate work, levelling up connectivity across our regions and nations remains a top priority for this government. This is why we are undertaking a review of regional air connectivity which will ensure the UK has the domestic transport connections local communities need.

■ Shipping: Crew

Karl Turner:

[25092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the reasons for the change in the number of ratings recorded in table SFR0303 of the Seafarers in the UK Shipping Industry: 2019 statistical release of 11 December 2019.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The figures shown in table SFR0303 of the UK Seafarer Statistics are based on data collected via the annual Chamber of Shipping (CoS) Seafarer Employment Survey. During the data collection period, the Department liaises closely with the CoS to ensure the quality and completeness of the data is as high as possible, with a response rate of around 90% of eligible companies achieved in 2019, similar to previous years. The survey does not provide complete coverage of UK seafarers active at sea but does represent the best current estimate.

However, trends over time can be impacted by changes in membership or operations. For example, if a large company decided to move its operations or crewing outside the UK, this could result in large fluctuations in the figures.

The Department has introduced measures to support greater training opportunities for ratings. We continue to work with stakeholders to promote the training and employment of all UK seafarers.

■ Transport: Coronavirus

Lisa Nandy:

[23542]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he is putting in place to help prepare (a) hauliers, (b) transport providers, (c) couriers and (d) other mobile members of the workforce for a widespread outbreak of coronavirus.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Public Health England, and their counterparts in the devolved administrations, are responsible for determining and publishing health advice in relation to Covid-19. On 14th February PHE published guidance for staff in the transport sector which was made available on the GOV.UK website.

The Department for Transport continues to work with PHE, the Department for Health and Social Care and the transport sector to ensure all guidance remains relevant and up to date.

TREASURY**■ Car Washes: Minimum Wage****Mr Steve Baker:****[23668]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many incidences of failure to pay the national minimum wage have been discovered by HMRC at hand car washes.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it. All businesses, irrespective of size or business sector, are responsible for paying the correct minimum wage to their staff.

HMRC continue to crack down on employers who ignore the law, ensuring workers receive the wages to which they are entitled.

HMRC recognise that hand car washes are a high-risk sector for NMW non-compliance. Since 2017 HMRC have undertaken proactive compliance activity targeted at car washes operating across the UK.

In 2017-18, HMRC closed 41 cases where NMW arrears were identified for workers employed at car washes, and a further 52 cases in 2018-19.

HMRC encourage any worker who suspects that they are being paid less than the NMW to contact ACAS on 0300 123 1100, or to submit a query online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pay-and-work-rights-complaints>.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Layla Moran:****[25728]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding from the public purse his Department plans to allocate to (a) preparations for a response to covid-19 and (b) research into a vaccine against that virus.

Steve Barclay:

Public safety is our top priority in our response to COVID-19. The UK is well prepared and the government is taking firm and comprehensive action to support families, businesses and public services. The government has already pledged £91m, of which £65m is for research to support the response to Coronavirus and other epidemic diseases, including vaccine research.

The government continues to look at a range of scenarios to ensure we can respond appropriately. The Budget on Wednesday will set out further details of HM Treasury's response.

■ Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group**Paul Maynard:****[25063]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group met in the last 12 months; and if he will publish the minutes of those meetings.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials meet with a wide range of stakeholders as part of ongoing policy development and implementation.

The Government recognises that widespread free access to cash is extremely important to the day-to-day lives of many consumers and businesses. The published summary of responses to the Call for Evidence on Cash and Digital Payments, in 2019, set out the Government's policy to support digital payments while safeguarding access to cash for those who need it.

To support this, the Government launched the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy (JACS) Group – which brings together HM Treasury, the Payment Systems Regulator, Financial Conduct Authority and Bank of England – to ensure comprehensive regulatory oversight of the end-to-end cash infrastructure.

The Terms of Reference for the JACS Group were published in June 2019. The Group has met in May 2019, July 2019, and February 2020. The JACS Group will publish a public update on its activities in due course.

■ London Capital and Finance: Insolvency**Mike Amesbury:****[25188]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support people that have lost savings as a result of the collapse of London Capital and Finance.

John Glen:

The administrators for London Capital & Finance (LCF) are currently estimating recoveries for investors affected by LCF's failure. The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), as the compensation scheme of last resort, can only provide compensation for claims connected with certain types of regulated activities.

The FSCS has been working closely with LCF's administrators and the Financial Conduct Authority to understand more about LCF's activities. This investigation led FSCS to announce certain key decisions in relation to LCF in January 2020. First, the FSCS has announced it will protect LCF bondholders who switched from stocks and shares ISAs to LCF bonds. The FSCS has now paid £2.7m compensation to these LCF customers. Second, the FSCS has announced it is unable to protect LCF bondholders who dealt with LCF before it was authorised to carry out financial services business. The FSCS will contact these LCF customers to confirm this. Third, the FSCS has said that there will be some LCF customers who were given misleading advice by LCF, and who will have valid claims for compensation. The FSCS will provide a further communication with details of when and how customers in this category can submit their claims. The FSCS will aim to start reviewing these advice claims in the first quarter of 2020.

The FSCS will provide a further update by the end of March outlining the next steps. In the meantime LCF customers do not need to take any action. Further information can be found at <https://www.fscs.org.uk/failed-firms/lcf/>.

■ Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[23585\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes to Vehicle Excise Duty and the £40,000 list price premium on the second-hand car market for (a) zero- or low-emission cars and (b) petrol or diesel cars.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[23597\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of appropriateness of the level of VED's £40,000 list price premium in incentivising the purchase of zero and low emission vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

VED is designed to incentivise the uptake of cars with low carbon dioxide emissions. Zero-emission cars pay neither first year VED, nor the standard rate in subsequent years.

The 'expensive car supplement' is designed to ensure people who can afford the most expensive cars pay more than the standard rate imposed on other drivers.

All taxes remain under review. Any changes will be considered by the Chancellor and announced at fiscal events.

■ Pensions: Lump Sum Payments

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[23608\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of raising the threshold at which people are able to take out small private pensions as a lump sum.

John Glen:

The small pots and trivial commutation rules are permissive sets of tax rules which pre-date the pension freedoms reforms introduced in 2015. The rules may allow an individual to access their pension as a lump sum if they are at least 55 years old, or retiring at an earlier age because of ill-health, and the value of the payment does not exceed £10,000 for small pots, or £30,000 for trivial commutation. The rules limit what arrangements can be accessed in this way.

The Government keeps all tax policy under review. Any changes will be announced through the Budget process.

■ Renewable Energy: Climate Change Levy

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[24386\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the environmental merits of removing the Climate Change Levy from commercially purchased renewable energy.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to meeting its climate change objectives in a cost-effective way.

Renewable electricity was exempt under the Climate Change Levy (CCL) from 2001-2015. The exemption was removed because, since the exemption was introduced, more targeted policies were introduced to support renewable electricity generation. In 2015-16 alone, the cost of all support measures for low carbon generation was about £4.3billion.

Without action, the exemption for renewable electricity under the CCL would have cost UK taxpayers £3.9bn from 2015/16-2020/21. One third of this value would have gone to supporting renewable electricity generated overseas. This electricity would not have contributed to the UK's climate change or renewable energy targets and therefore would not have represented good value for money for the taxpayer.

■ Self-employed: Tax Avoidance**Ruth Cadbury:****[23423]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will establish a statutory definition of the self-employed to better support status determinations for tax purposes under IR35.

Jesse Norman:

Employment status is straightforward for the vast majority of people. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) developed the Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) tool in 2017 in conjunction with tax specialists, contractors, and other stakeholders, to support businesses in applying the off-payroll working rules correctly. CEST was further enhanced in November 2019.

In the vast majority of uses, CEST will determine whether the engagement is employed or self-employed for tax purposes. For those more complex or finely balanced cases where CEST produces an undetermined outcome, HMRC provide detailed guidance and dedicated support, including in the Employment Status Manual: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employment-status-manual>. HMRC will stand by CEST's results provided accurate and correct information is used, in accordance with HMRC's guidance.

Ruth Cadbury:**[23433]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the enhanced Check Employment Status Tool in relation to IR35.

Ruth Cadbury:**[23435]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to improve the accuracy of the Check Employment Status Tool since November 2019.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[23436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the Check Employment Status Tool in correctly identifying the employment status of individuals in relation to IR35.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[23439\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to introduce changes to the Check Employment Status Tool ahead of reforms to IR35 within the private sector.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC developed the Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) online tool to help organisations and individuals determine employment status for tax and decide whether the off-payroll working rules apply.

The CEST service was developed in conjunction with tax specialists, contractors and other stakeholders. It was rigorously tested against established case law and settled cases to ensure it provides accurate results in line with current binding judgments. In the vast majority of uses, CEST will determine whether the engagement is employed or self-employed for tax purposes. HMRC will stand by CEST's results provided accurate and correct information is used, in accordance with HMRC's guidance.

In November 2019, HMRC launched an enhanced version of CEST, having worked with over 300 stakeholders to identify improvements. The tool's enhancements included making questions and the results clearer, increasing the number of questions to provide a more thorough assessment, and building in features to reduce user errors.

Since launch, HMRC have monitored customer feedback and have updated the tool's language where this improves the customer experience. This includes providing additional help text and links to off-payroll guidance in HMRC's Employment Status Manual. HMRC are continuing to monitor feedback with a view to making future usability updates.

Martyn Day:

[\[23512\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to pause the roll-out of the off-payroll tax until the House of Lords has completed its review.

Jesse Norman:

As announced at Budget 2018, the reform of the off-payroll working rules will come into effect from April 2020. It is routine for the Finance Bill Sub-Committee of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee to inquire into the draft Finance Bill, focusing on specific areas of interest to the Sub-Committee.

Martyn Day:

[\[23557\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made the effect of proposed legislative changes to IR35 on the income of healthcare professionals who provide out-of-hours services.

Jesse Norman:

The off-payroll working rules are designed to ensure that an individual who works like an employee, but through their own limited company, pays broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions as other employees. The rules do not apply to the self-employed or stop anyone working through their own company.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published in July 2019 sets out HMRC's assessment that the reform to the off-payroll working rules is expected to affect 170,000 individuals. The TIIN can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020>.

HMRC are undertaking an extensive programme of education and support to help organisations and contractors prepare for the reform.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Candidates: Equality****Ms Harriet Harman:****[24999]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will implement Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 on publishing diversity data of candidates and elected representatives.

Elizabeth Truss:

We will keep section 106 under review, as we do with other uncommenced provisions in the Equality Act 2010. The government can play a role in supporting political parties to take action, but ultimately it is for parties to ensure that they select a diverse range of candidates and they should lead the way in improving diverse representation.

■ Employment: Discrimination**Ms Harriet Harman:****[25001]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will reintroduce Section 124 of the Equality Act 2010 enabling tribunals to make wider recommendations to tackle discrimination in the workforce.

Elizabeth Truss:

Section 124 (3)(b) of the Equality Act 2010 was repealed in the Deregulation Act 2015. Following consultation in 2013, the Government decided that wider recommendations by tribunals, which were not mandatory on employers, did not serve any useful purpose, yet created a perception of burden and unfairness for business - the estimated cost of making wider recommendations to employers who did implement them was about £2000.

Tribunals already had and continue to have the power to make critical observations about an employer's processes and procedures. We have no plans to reinstate Section 124(3)(b) of the Act.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[25002]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will reintroduce section 138 of the Equality Act 2010 setting out the discrimination and equal pay questionnaire procedure for the collection of information by someone who thinks they may have been unlawfully discriminated against from the person or provider who is thought to be responsible for the unlawful treatment.

Elizabeth Truss:

Section 138 of the Equality Act 2010 was repealed in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. The government has no plans to reinstate these provisions.

Employees can still put questions to their employer or former employer concerning a claim under the Act if they wish. A Court or Tribunal may consider any relevant questions and answers as part of the evidence of the case, and may draw inferences if questions are not answered. At the time of the repeal ACAS produced a good practice guide with advice on how to do this, which can be found here:

<https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4971>

■ Equality

Ms Harriet Harman:

[24226]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will make it her policy to implement section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the socio-economic duty.

Elizabeth Truss:

Successive British Governments have not implemented the socio-economic duty for English and cross-border bodies, and the current Government has no plans to do so. Such a general duty has the potential to become a tick-box exercise complied with to minimise the risk of legal challenge rather than to promote real change in social mobility.

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission: Finance

Ms Harriet Harman:

[25003]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how much funding from the public purse the Equality and Human Rights Commission has received in each of the last five years.

Elizabeth Truss:

Funding received by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in the last five years is set out in the table below;

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total	£23,542,000	£20,415,029	£19,345,000	£18,349,000	£17,431,000

■ Harassment

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[25000\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will reintroduce section 40 of the Equality Act 2010 on third party harassment.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Government has recently consulted on how best to strengthen and clarify the law on workplace third party harassment and will publish its response in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme: GovTech Fund**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[24287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she has taken to publicise the availability of the Tech Fund for employees applying for Access to Work to (a) organisations and (b) disabled people.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[24288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many disabled people have (a) applied for and (b) received funding for technology through the Tech Fund.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[24289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with dyslexia (a) applied for and (b) received funding for technology through the Tech Fund.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [\[24290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Tech Fund is available to people that do not receive human support funded through (a) Access to Work and (b) other funding streams.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Access to Work Tech Fund is only available for people applying for Access to Work where assistive technology replaces existing or proposed human support.

Since its announcement in Spring 2018, take up of Tech Fund has been low (fewer than 10 applicants). As a result, we are currently reviewing this and engaging with stakeholders to further understand the issues that they may be facing or those preventing them from benefiting from the Tech Fund. We are keen to find new ways of helping Access to Work recipients to become aware of, and benefit from, the latest assistive technology that best meets their needs, and would welcome further views on this.

Access to Work has not undertaken any publicising of the Tech Fund specifically. Access to Work continues to undertake targeted marketing and awareness raising activities. For example, the scheme is promoted to benefit claimants through Jobcentre Plus and to a range of business leaders through the Disability Confident

scheme. We have also worked with a variety of stakeholder organisations to market Access to Work to their clients, including sharing information about how individuals can apply for support.

■ **Coronavirus: Sick Leave**

Olivia Blake: [\[24460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that workers who have been quarantined or who have self-quarantined as a result of covid-19 receive the sick leave to which they are entitled.

Mims Davies:

We will introduce, as part of the Department of Health's emergency Bill, provisions for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to be made from day 1 in relation to Covid-19.

We will set out full details when the emergency legislation is published.

Employers have been urged to make sure they use their discretion and respect the medical need to self-isolate in making decisions about sick pay.

SSP is a legal minimum and we encourage all employers to make these day-1 payments immediately.

We will work with employers and workers to ensure they're supported to do the right thing, look after their staff and each other, and use their discretion to make the right decisions to protect public health.

■ **Industrial Diseases: Compensation**

Hywel Williams: [\[25626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many awards of compensation under the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers Compensation) Act 1979 were paid to workers employed in (a) slate quarrying and (b) slate mining in the last year for which figures are available; and how many of those cases related to diffuse mesothelioma.

Hywel Williams: [\[25627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many awards of compensation under the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers Compensation) Act 1979 were paid to workers employed in coal mining in the last year for which figures are available; and how many of those cases related to diffuse mesothelioma.

Hywel Williams: [\[25628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many awards of compensation under the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers Compensation) Act 1979 were paid to workers employed in the textile industries in the last year for which figures are available; and how many of those cases related to diffuse mesothelioma.

Hywel Williams:

[\[25629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many awards of compensation under the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers Compensation) Act 1979 were paid to workers employed in the pottery industries in the last year for which figures are available; and how many of those cases related to diffuse mesothelioma.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Pension Credit

John Nicolson:

[\[23424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Pension Credit toolkit in increasing uptake of 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.

Working with our stakeholders is an important part of our ongoing strategy to improve take-up of Pension Credit because we know that often the best ways to reach eligible pensioners is through trusted organisations working in the community. We have therefore updated the Pension Credit toolkit to include the new campaign materials, supplementing the resources it already contains to assist agencies and welfare rights organisations to encourage Pension Credit take-up and support pensioners applying for Pension Credit. It can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>

The most recent information available on the number of times the Pension Credit toolkit was accessed this year is in the table below. For comparative purposes it includes data on the number of viewings of the Pension Credit overview page on GOV.UK, which is considered the most likely initial starting point for the public obtaining on line information about Pension Credit.

WEBPAGE VIEWINGS (2020)

PAGE	1-7 JAN	8-14 JAN	15-21 JAN	22-28 JAN	29 JAN – 4 FEB	5-11 FEB	12-18 FEB	19-25 FEB	26 FEB – 3 MAR
Pension Credit toolkit: landing page	14	16	12	41	73	323	268	268	101
Pension Credit toolkit: advice and guidance for stakeholders	39	59	72	66	87	350	240	205	142
Pension Credit guidance for customers overview page	10,166	11,045	12,120	13,599	14,577	28,790	17,907	15,952	16,110

Notes:

1. Data refers to the following webpages:

- toolkit landing page <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>
- advice and guidance for stakeholders <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit/pension-credit-toolkit-advice-and-guidance-for-stakeholders>
- first page of the main Pension Credit guide for claimants <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>

2. Data shows the number of times these webpages were accessed.

■ Social Security Benefits

Chris Stephens: [R] [25697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants in receipt of personal independence payment (PIP) are being paid a rate of employment and support allowance or the limited capability for work component of universal credit, including associated premiums, that does not fully reflect their PIP entitlement.

Chris Stephens: [R] [25698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the amount of underpayments resulting from claimants in receipt of personal independence payment being paid a rate of employment and support allowance or the limited capability for work component of universal credit, including associated premiums, that does not fully reflect their PIP entitlement.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department publishes annual statistics on fraud and error in the benefit system, which are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system>. These include estimates of underpayments due to errors relating to premia and income from other benefits. The information requested on the total number of claimants receiving ESA or Universal Credit payments inconsistent with their PIP and other relevant living and care arrangements is not available and it would incur disproportionate cost to determine this number.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Lisa Nandy: [23572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she will take to reduce requirements for people in receipt of benefits to physically attend appointments if they need to self-isolate in response to a potential covid-19 infection.

Mims Davies:

I refer the Rt. Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 March 2020 to Question UIN [23556].

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Steve Reed: [23571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will suspend the use of sanctions on benefit claimants in the event of a covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

The department has no plans to suspend the use of sanctions in the event of an outbreak because – as is the case now - the decision to apply a sanction is considered on a case by case basis and takes into consideration the claimant's capability and circumstances.

When claimants tell us that they are self-isolating or that they have been diagnosed with covid-19, we will review the claimant's conditionality requirements to ensure that they remain reasonable, helping them avoid sanctions.

■ Social Security Benefits: Muscular Dystrophy

Ruth Jones:

[\[25191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for her policies of Muscular Dystrophy UK's report entitled, Below standard: MDUK's assessment of the benefits system, published on 28 February 2020.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department places a strong emphasis on engaging with stakeholders to inform health and disability policy to ensure we are addressing the right problems in the welfare system. Muscular Dystrophy UK's report entitled 'Below standard: MDUK's assessment of the benefits system' offers insights into the challenges faced by people living with muscle-wasting conditions.

Government will reflect carefully on these findings in the DWP Green Paper on health and disability benefits and support.

■ Universal Credit

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[24231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the time taken for a claimant to receive their first universal credit payment on the financial situation of those claimants; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

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

Claimants can access up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to 16 months. Claimants who utilise this support have more money in the first 6 months than on legacy benefits.

Our Work Coaches gauge claimants' financial needs from their first interview. As part of this, every claimant is offered an advance payment on application. Proposed repayments of the advance are explained, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable both now and when considering the repayments required.

The Department has delivered a number of improvements to support claimants during their first assessment period, such as removing waiting days and paying those

claimants moving from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit a two-week run-on. We are also introducing a two-week run-on for eligible claimants of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance from July 2020.

Data surrounding Universal Credit payments made in full and on time is published at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Steve Reed:

[25665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will reduce the five-week waiting time to receive a first payment of universal credit in the event of an outbreak of covid-19.

Will Quince:

DWP has contingency plans in place that prioritise activities to protect payments to claimants and access to new claims when capacity is compromised.

Our jobcentre staff gauge claimants' financial need and as part of this, every claimant can access an advance of up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months.

Proposed repayments of the advance are explained, and all claimants are advised to request a level of advance which is manageable both now and when considering the repayments required. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to 16 months.

Claimants can discuss queries about how fluctuating income affects Universal Credit with jobcentre staff and case managers, who can also signpost to services appropriate to the individual circumstances.

Universal Credit takes earnings into account in a way that is fair and transparent. The amount paid reflects, as closely as possible, the actual circumstances of a household during each monthly assessment period. This allows Universal Credit awards to be adjusted on a monthly basis, ensuring that if claimant's incomes falls, they do not have to wait several months for a rise in their Universal Credit award. Currently there are no plans to change assessment periods.

■ Universal Credit: Employment

Damian Hinds:

[901405]

What steps she is taking to ensure that universal credit claimants benefit financially from moving into work.

Will Quince:

The Government has made significant investment to improve work incentives including: the reduction in the Universal Credit taper rate from 65% to 63% in 2017,

and an extra £1.7 billion a year put into work allowances for working parents and disabled claimants to increase them by £1,000 a year from April 2019. This is providing a boost to the incomes of the lowest paid and result in 2.4 million families keeping an extra £630 per year of what they earn.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business Update

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):
[[HCWS154](#)]

On Monday 9 March, Jingye Group, a Chinese steelmaker, formally completed its purchase of British Steel Limited from the Official Receiver, securing more than 3,200 highly skilled jobs in the UK.

Jingye has acquired British Steel's steelworks at Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and on Teesside, as well as subsidiary businesses TSP Engineering and FN Steel in the Netherlands.

On 22 May last year British Steel entered compulsory liquidation. The court appointed Official Receiver took control of the company and together with Special Manager, EY, was responsible for running an independent sales process.

Upon entering liquidation an indemnity was provided by Government which enabled British Steel to continue to trade, and staff to continue to be employed. During this time the Government worked closely with the Official Receiver, Special Managers and all interested parties to support the sales process.

Securing a positive outcome for British Steel would not have been possible without the considerable efforts and commitment of Jingye, the Official Receiver, Special Managers, employees and trade unions.

The British Steel Support Group, set up by the Rt Hon Member for Tunbridge Wells and maintained by the Rt Hon Member for South Northamptonshire also played an important role in supporting the sales process. The group comprised of members from across the House of Commons, local political leaders, local enterprise partnerships, trade union representatives, British Steel management, and representatives from Make UK and the Federation of Small Businesses.

The sale protects thousands of highly skilled jobs and secures steelmaking operations at British Steel's sites in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North East. Jingye has outlined ambitious plans for the business, pledging investment of £1.2 billion to modernise sites and improve energy efficiency and environmental performance.

While more than 3,200 jobs have been secured, around 450 staff have, sadly, not be retained. The number of employees was negotiated with the trade unions alongside the new terms and conditions. The Government is offering its full support for those affected, mobilising the Rapid Response Service and National Careers Service to give immediate on the ground support and advice. This Service will help those affected to transition into other employment or take on new training opportunities.

More broadly, the Government is committed to working with businesses and local government to grow and modernise the economy of the Humber area. Over the long term we will need industry in the Humber area to make a major contribution to national net zero and energy supply goals. We will shortly be publishing our Local Industrial Strategy for the Humber which will reflect these ambitions.

We look forward to working with the new management team at British Steel to ensure that the company can realise its full potential. This sale is a vote of confidence in the UK steel industry. Britain and the world will continue to need high-quality steel, and British steel is amongst the best in the world.