

Daily Report

Thursday, 12 March 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 12 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:42 P.M., 12 March 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Slavery: Prosecutions

Steve Reed:

[\[26951\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 757, on Slavery: Prosecutions, how many prosecutions there have been involving child victims under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in each year since 2015.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) records all offences charged under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and within those, the offences that involve child abuse are flagged. Since the Act came into force and up to the end of September 2019, the number of Modern Slavery Act offences flagged as child abuse is as follows:

- 2015-2016: 1
- 2016-2017: 21
- 2017-2018: 26
- 2018-2019: 8
- April-Sept 2019: 3

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

There is no indication of the number of individual defendants prosecuted for these offences, the final outcome of the prosecution proceeding, or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at the time of finalisation. It is often the case that defendants will be prosecuted for more than one offence in the same set of proceedings.

Steve Reed:

[\[26952\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020, to Question 757, on Slavery: Prosecutions, if her Department will publish annually the number of prosecutions that take place under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 of cases involving child victims.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) publishes a detailed breakdown of prosecutions for all cases flagged as modern slavery and child abuse within the 2018-19 Violence against Women and Girls Report. This is supplemented by the quarterly Data Bulletins, which are available on the CPS Website.

The CPS reviews their data publication policy periodically throughout the year and at the beginning of the financial year. As part of this review the CPS will consider what data it will publish in 2020/21.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Business: Coronavirus****Sir David Evennett:**[\[24253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the financial effect of the outbreak of covid-19 on businesses to date.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is extremely well prepared for these types of outbreaks; we are taking all necessary precautions to protect the public, including engaging with industry and the business community to discuss their preparedness planning. We have been receiving regular information from our stakeholders and continue to work together to keep on top of the situation.

The Government is closely monitoring developments in relation to potential economic impacts on the UK economy, as well as individual businesses and supply chains. For individual businesses, the first port of call for advice and support should still be gov.uk and the Department is scaling up its Business Support Helpline so businesses of all sizes can pick up the phone for guidance.

The Department is also working with Her Majesty's Treasury to actively look at ways to support businesses, especially small-and medium-sized businesses, through this temporary period of disruption.

■ Companies: Billing**Scott Mann:**[\[25709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to require large companies to pay smaller firms on time.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to delivering on our manifesto commitment to clamp down on late payment and strengthen the powers of the Small Business Commissioner (SBC) to support small businesses who are least able to cover financial shortfalls and find temporary finance more difficult and more expensive to obtain.

Legislation already exists under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which sets out that payment terms between two businesses should not exceed 60 days, unless they are fair to both parties.

Suppliers can also claim statutory interest, and debt recovery costs, on invoices not paid within the agreed period or (if no period is agreed) within 30 days. It also establishes maximum 30 day payment terms for transactions with public authorities.

We will shortly be consulting on the merits of extending the powers of the Office of the Small Business Commissioner to intervene and advocate for small businesses,

with less than 50 employees, in payment disputes with a larger business (50 or more employees).

■ Disability: UK Trade with EU

Seema Malhotra:

[\[26878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to (a) transpose the European Accessibility Act 2019 into UK law or (b) bring forward legislative proposals to ensure equivalent or enhanced protections for disabled people after the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The deadline for transposing the European Accessibility Act (EAA) is 27 June 2022. As the Government has committed not to extend the Transition Period the UK will not be required to transpose the EAA.

The UK already has robust legislation on accessibility through the protections covered by the Equality Act 2006, Equality Act 2010, and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination on grounds of disability and imposes a duty on providers of goods and services to make reasonable adjustments to prevent this.

The Government will consider how further to improve or enhance accessibility through domestic legislation, including by using emerging technologies to develop innovative solutions to accessibility challenges, and provide real benefit to citizens with disabilities over the years ahead.

■ Home Energy and Lifestyle Management: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[\[25155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many green deal agreements were issued to Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd for the purpose of installing external building insulation in each constituency in Scotland.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The number of Green Deal plans provided by Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd which included External Wall insulation in Scotland by parliamentary constituency are shown in the table below.

To manage the risk of revealing personal or commercial data, our approach is not to release non-zero counts of less than five for a small geographic area.

CONSTITUENCY	GD PLANS
Airdrie and Shotts	6
Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock	1-4
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk	10

CONSTITUENCY	GD PLANS
Central Ayrshire	74
Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill	1-4
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East	75
East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow	84
Edinburgh West	5
Falkirk	9
Glasgow East	18
Glasgow North East	58
Glasgow South	1-4
Glasgow South West	1-4
Inverclyde	27
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	44
Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath	1-4
Linlithgow and East Falkirk	11
Livingston	7
Midlothian	1-4
Motherwell and Wishaw	1-4
Paisley and Renfrewshire North	220
Paisley and Renfrewshire South	23
Rutherglen and Hamilton West	73
Stirling	18
West Dunbartonshire	63
Scotland	846

■ Liquefied petroleum gas

Mr Richard Holden: [26967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether LPG providers are regulated by the Energy Ombudsman.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The regulation of the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply market for domestic suppliers is a matter for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) exercising its role as an independent competition authority.

Domestic bulk LPG providers are subject to regulation under the CMA Statutory Orders: The Domestic Bulk Liquefied Petroleum Gas Market Investigation Order, 13 October 2008 and The Domestic Bulk Liquefied Petroleum Gas Market Investigation (Metered Estates), Order 6 May 2009. The CMA continues to monitor compliance with these Orders.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/liquefied-petroleum-gas-lpg-market-orders-and-calculator

Separately, customers supplied by member companies of Liquid Gas UK (the trade association for LPG suppliers) have access to free independent arbitration as a route to dispute resolution (see <https://www.liquidgasuk.org/advice/ombudsman-scheme>).

■ Parental Leave

Shaun Bailey: [901476]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government Equalities Office is taking to help promote shared parental leave.

Paul Scully:

In the past 2 years the Government has spent over £1.75 million on communications campaigns to promote Shared Parental Leave to parents and employers and has achieved and maintained high levels of awareness of the policy. The Government is also improving tools and guidance for parents and employers to make it easier for them to access the scheme.

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [901479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government Equalities Office is taking to help promote shared parental leave.

Paul Scully:

In the past 2 years the Government has spent over £1.75 million on communications campaigns to promote Shared Parental Leave to parents and employers and has achieved and maintained high levels of awareness of the policy. The Government is also improving tools and guidance for parents and employers to make it easier for them to access the scheme.

■ Post Office: Finance

Gill Furniss:

[\[26959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) the most recent Network Subsidy Payment or (b) any other funding from the public purse to the Post Office (i) was and (ii) will be used to fund any settlement or litigation.

Paul Scully:

The Government believes that Postmasters are at the heart of communities and we recognise the strength of feelings about the negative impact the Horizon Court case has had on postmasters, causing distress to them and their families.

In relation to £57.75 million settlement that was agreed between Post Office Limited and the postmasters concerned. The costs involved in the legal defence of this litigation were drawn from Post Office Limited's own commercial revenues, including the settlement offer. The shareholder has specifically required that government funding is not used for this purpose.

■ Small Businesses: Ofcom and Ofgem

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[25700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has plans to encourage (a) Ofgem and (b) Ofcom to cooperate on producing guidance for best practice in their dealings with SMEs operating in the (i) energy, (ii) communications and (iii) other sectors.

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[25701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce a redress service for SMEs in the (a) energy and (b) communications sectors that is equivalent to that service offered by the Financial Ombudsman Service to SMEs operating in the financial sector.

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[25702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the definition of a microbusiness on access to complaint handling and dispute resolution processes by SMEs in the (a) energy and (b) communications sectors.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government wants all consumers to pay a fair price for their energy. In 2019 Ofgem launched a Strategic Review of the Microbusiness Retail Market to better understand the customer journey for microbusinesses and consider what solutions may be necessary to safeguard them as consumers. The regulator plans to publish a consultation this spring setting out its detailed policy solutions in response to the Review's findings.

Microbusinesses display similar characteristics to domestic consumers when buying energy. Therefore, where they have exhausted their energy company's own

complaints procedure, businesses with up to 10 employees can make a complaint to the Ombudsman Services: Energy.

Larger businesses are more likely to be able to effectively procure their energy supply, as they procure other commodities for their businesses.

The Communications Act 2003 places a duty on Ofcom to ensure that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures are available for domestic and small business customers (defined as up to 10 employees). All communications providers must be a member of an approved scheme, Ofcom currently approves two ADR Schemes: Ombudsman Services: Communications (OS) and the Communications and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS).

In 2019 Ofcom published an independent review of the two approved ADR schemes. The review found that both schemes show a high level of decision-making accuracy with regard to case acceptance or rejection, and Ofcom is satisfied that both ADR Schemes are following the requirements set out in the ADR regulations and the Communications Act.

It is for Ofgem and Ofcom to review the evidence and to work with Government to determine whether further regulatory intervention, or other steps, are necessary to assist SMEs.

Though there are currently no plans to offer joint guidance between Ofcom, Ofgem and the FCA, they continue to cooperate on dealing with issues affecting SMEs in their respective sectors.

■ Solar Power and Wind Power

James Wild:

[26976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many (a) solar PV and (b) onshore wind projects have deployed on under the merchant model since the Pot 1 Contracts for Difference auction was held; and what the total generating capacity was of those projects.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Every quarter, BEIS publishes the Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD), which lists applications for renewable energy projects as they progress through planning. The latest version was published on 14 January 2020.

A breakdown of merchant solar PV and onshore wind projects by number and capacity can be accessed on the REPD, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewable-energy-planning-database-monthly-extract>.

■ Wind Power

James Wild:

[26975]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total generating capacity is of onshore wind farms that are (a) operational, (b) under

construction and (c) have planning approval but are not under construction in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Every quarter, BEIS publishes the Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD), which lists applications for renewable energy projects as they progress through planning. The latest version was published on 14 January 2020.

A breakdown of onshore wind farms by capacity, planning status and location can be accessed on the REPD, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewable-energy-planning-database-monthly-extract>.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Elections: Coronavirus

Steve Reed:

[\[25106\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contingency plans he has in place for the elections on 7 May 2020 in the event of a covid-19 outbreak.

Chloe Smith:

The Government continues to assess the impact of Covid-19 and is reviewing any implications for the delivery of public services on an ongoing basis. Our approach has been, and will continue to be, guided by the evidence and latest advice from medical experts, including the Chief Medical Officer.

We are currently working to facilitate the local, mayoral, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 7 May going ahead as planned.

We will of course continue to monitor the situation, and we are developing our responses and contingency plans as necessary.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Travellers

Kate Green:

[\[27547\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what progress has been made on (a) making Church land available for Gypsy and Traveller sites and (b) other plans to tackle racism and discrimination as agreed at the General Synod in February 2019.

Andrew Selous:

The Church Commissioners manage the charitable and historic endowments of the Church to support mission and ministry financially. The Commissioners seek to make provision for a range of housing types on their land but have not recently been made aware of any requirements for the direct provision of Gypsy and Traveller

accommodation on that land. Other land at a parish and diocesan level is not under the ownership or management of the Church Commissioners.

The Church has an active network for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and is also running an annual training day for clergy that offers support and guidance, alongside a conference on 24th March 2020 which aims to give voice and visibility to minorities not traditionally heard, seen and represented in the Church of England.

The Church of England's Ministry Division and clergy senior appointments team have developed a programme of work to support vocations from UKME communities and is working towards increasing representation in the senior leadership of the Church.

The Church will also be making an additional £20 million available over three years under its new Social Impact Investment Project, which incentivises positive investment in communities over the maximisation of financial return. One of the key areas for this project will be looking at the social impact of housing and consideration will be given to the housing needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peoples.

At its February 2020 session the General Synod of the Church of England debated and passed the following motion:

“ Windrush Commitment and Legacy

That this Synod, commemorating in 2018 the martyrdom of the Revd Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., noting with joy the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush liner in the United Kingdom in June 1948 bringing nearly 500 Commonwealth citizens, mainly from the Caribbean, to mainland UK; and the eventual arrival of approximately half a million people from the West Indies, who were called to Britain as British subjects to help rebuild the post-war United Kingdom:

- a. lament, on behalf of Christ's Church, and apologises for, the conscious and unconscious racism experienced by countless black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Anglicans in 1948 and subsequent years, when seeking to find a spiritual home in their local Church of England parish churches, the memory of which is still painful to committed Anglicans who, in spite of this racism from clergy and others, have remained faithful to the Church of England and their Anglican heritage;
- b. request the Archbishops' Council to commission research to assess the impact of this on the Church of England in terms of church members lost, churches declining into closure, and vocations to ordained and licensed lay ministries missed, and to report back to this Synod and the wider Church.”
- c. express gratitude to God for the indispensable contribution to the mission, ministry, prayer and worship of Christ's Church in this nation made by people of BAME descent in the Church of England;
- d. acknowledge and give joyful thanks for the wider contribution of the 'Windrush generation' and their descendants to UK life and culture in every field of human activity, including service across the Armed Forces and other services during and after the Second World War; and

- e. resolve to continue, with great effort and urgency, to stamp out all forms of conscious or unconscious racism, and to commit the Church of England to increase the participation and representation of lay and ordained BAME Anglicans throughout Church life;
- f. request the Archbishop's Council to appoint an independent person external to the Church to assess the current situation as regards race and ethnicity in the Church, in order to present a report to this Synod with recommendations for actions to achieve reconciliation and authentic belonging so that we can move towards truly being a Church for all people;
- g. to the greater glory of the God in whose image every human being is made.

DEFENCE

■ Clyde Naval Base

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[26968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference the Government's announcement entitled, £500 million for Faslane, published in August 2015, what the objectives are of that upgrade; and what progress he has made on completing that upgrade.

Jeremy Quin:

The Clyde Infrastructure Programme was established in 2015 to coordinate the delivery of multiple infrastructure projects to build new or upgrade/update existing facilities within the geographically constrained sites in Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, while ensuring the Naval Base could concurrently support Continuous at Sea Deterrence.

There are currently fourteen active projects within the programme. The total programme value is estimated at £1.6 billion over fifteen years.

I refer the hon. Member to the latest Clyde Infrastructure Programme Accounting Officer Assessment document for further detail. This is available in the Library of the House and on the GOV.UK website.

■ Ministry of Defence: Contracts

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[26981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent from the public purse on contracted companies charging management fees to sub-contracted companies where both companies are owned by the same parent company in each of the past five years.

Jeremy Quin:

This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Ministry of Defence: Infrastructure and Projects Authority**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[26982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times has the scope of a project listed in his Department's Major Projects Portfolio has changed; what the cost to the public purse was of those changes; and what assessment he has made of the effect of those changes to the (a) cost to the public purse and (b) timeframe for the completion of those projects.

Jeremy Quin:

The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[26984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of his Department's major projects are categorised by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority as (a) green and (b) red.

Jeremy Quin:

The most recent Infrastructure and Projects Authority Annual Report on Major Projects, published in 2019, categorised no Defence programmes as green and one programme as red, out of a total of 35 Defence Programmes on the Government Major Projects Portfolio.

■ Ministry of Defence: Polling Stations**Luke Pollard:** [\[26963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's premises can be used as polling stations.

Jeremy Quin:

Ministry of Defence policy is that irreducible spare capacity on the defence estate should be used in full, and considers the use of its facilities for other purposes in accordance with Departmental policy, where such use is consistent with operational, security and safety requirements. This would include any request to use premises as a polling station.

■ Nuclear Weapons: Testing**Carol Monaghan:** [\[26931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason veterans who were present at British nuclear testing have experienced a 12-month delay before receiving a decision from Veterans UK on their War Disablement Pension applications.

Johnny Mercer:

Decisions on war pension claims are evidence based. In line with all claims made under the War Pension Scheme, claims relating to service during British nuclear testing are considered on their individual merits and specific facts. Decisions are

made in accordance with legislation, namely the Naval, Military and Air Forces etc. (Disablement and Death) Service Pensions Order, revised April 2006 and are made based on the medical and service evidence available at the time, for this reason the length of time taken to consider individual claims may vary.

As of the end of February 2020, the Department's rolling 12 month Average Clearance time for War Pension Scheme claims was at a figure of 137.60 working days.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Cricket: Children

Gavin Newlands:

[25131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people under 18 years of age have participated in cricket since 2005.

Nigel Huddleston:

Data from the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey show that in the 2018-19 academic year 575,800 children and young people in England aged 5-16 participated in cricket at least once a week. This is an increase of 1.8% since the previous year (441,500 in 2017-18) when the survey was launched. Data on those aged 16+ is collected through the Active Lives Survey. Reports and data tables for both surveys can be found on Sport England's website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives>.

Grassroots sport is a devolved matter, so data on cricket participation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is a matter for the devolved administrations of those nations.

■ Football

Scott Benton:

[25201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to work with the (a) English Football League, (b) Premier League and (c) Football Association to promote sustainable (i) financial planning and (ii) good governance in football league clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many with a great history. It is vital they are protected.

This government is committed to undertaking a fan led review of football governance, which will include consideration of the Owners' and Directors' test, and will work closely with the football authorities as we decide the scope and structure of the review.

My predecessor also recently met with the EFL to discuss the progress of their own review into club governance.

■ Gambling: Regulation

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: [\[25710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to respond to the findings of the National Audit Office report entitled Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people, published 28 February 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government is committed to reducing gambling-related harm and works closely with the Gambling Commission. We have committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 and will announce further details in due course. We welcome the National Audit Office's report on *Gambling Regulation: Problem Gambling and Protecting Vulnerable People* and are considering its recommendations carefully.

Carolyn Harris: [\[26925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the National Audit Office report entitled, Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people, published in February 2020, what steps he is taking to ensure the protection of vulnerable gamblers.

Carolyn Harris: [\[26926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the National Audit Office report entitled, Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the Gambling Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Carolyn Harris: [\[26927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the National Audit Office report entitled, Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people, published in February 2020, whether he plans to allocate additional funding to the Gambling Commission.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government is committed to reducing gambling-related harm and works closely with the Gambling Commission. We have committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 and will announce further details in due course. We welcome the National Audit Office's report on *Gambling Regulation: Problem Gambling and Protecting Vulnerable People* and are considering its recommendations carefully.

■ Internet: Bullying

Helen Hayes: [\[26908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to (a) tackle and (b) protect victims of online (i) racist, (ii) transphobic and (iii) homophobic abuse.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. Companies will be held to account for tackling harms occurring on their platforms, including hate crime.

The Law Commission is also conducting a second phase of its review of the legal framework around abusive and offensive communications online. This will include considering whether co-ordinated harassment by groups of people online could be more effectively dealt with by the criminal law. The review will make specific recommendations for legal reform and is due to report in early 2021.

Internet: Harassment**Helen Hayes:**[\[26907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle online (a) direct or indirect threats of physical or sexual violence against women, (b) targeted harassment of women and (c) privacy violations of women.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. Companies will be held to account for tackling harms occurring on their platforms, including hate crime, harassment and cyberstalking.

The Law Commission is also to conducting a second phase of its review of the legal framework around abusive and offensive communications online. This will include considering whether co-ordinated harassment by groups of people online could be more effectively dealt with by the criminal law. The review will make specific recommendations for legal reform and is due to report in early 2021.

Rugby: Public Participation**Gavin Newlands:**[\[25135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the (a) Scottish Rugby Union, (b) Irish Rugby Football Union, (c) Welsh Rugby Union and (d) Rugby Football Union on increasing participation rates in rugby union.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Secretary of State and I meet with sports national governing bodies on a regular basis to ensure they are supporting grassroots participation in line with the objectives of the government's Sporting Future strategy. Ministers continue to work with national governing bodies of sport to ensure that the Sporting Future strategy is implemented effectively, and that grassroots participation is supported.

Sport is a devolved matter and therefore support for grassroots sport and physical activity in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the respective Home Nations Sports Councils and devolved governments.

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is in regular contact with Sport England, which is the organisation directly responsible for investing in and supporting grassroots sport in England. Through Sport England, government is investing £12.6m in the RFU over 2017-21 for its work on participation and supporting talented young athletes. Since 2016, England has invested a further £12.61m in multi-sport projects where rugby union is identified as one of the sports benefitting.

■ Sports Competitors: Visas

Gavin Newlands:

[25141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions officials in her Department have had with their counterparts in the Home Office on the effect of Tier 4 visa regulations on amateur sports.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS and Home Office officials are in regular contact on matters relating to visas for sport. The Home Office also routinely engages with sports governing bodies, organisations within the sport sector and other government departments on visa issues.

Home Office definitions of amateur and professional sports persons contained in the immigration rules were established following full consultation with all recognised sports governing bodies. The full definitions can be found in the document attached. The rules surrounding entering the UK on a Tier 4 (General) student visa can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa>.

Tier 4 visas have restrictions imposed regarding what work can be undertaken during the period agreed. For example, one of the conditions of holding a Tier 4 visa is that foreign students must not work in certain jobs, for example professional sports person or sports coach.

Attachments:

1. Tier 4 Guidance [T4_Migrant_Guidance_October_2019.pdf]

■ Sports: Young People

Gavin Newlands:

[25132]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect on participation rates by young people of media coverage of sporting events listed under Group A under the terms outlined in Part IV of the Broadcasting Act 1996; and if he will make statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

Britain is a sporting superpower; our shared victories in London and Rio demonstrated not only our sporting prowess but also the pride and passion for sport

that is central to our national identity. That is why the Broadcasting Act 1996 ensures that events of special national significance such as the Olympics and Paralympics can be seen as widely as possible. While DCMS has not conducted a study into the impact of viewing the specific events listed in 'Group A' on children's activity levels, we know that they have the power to unite the nation, and to inspire us all to get active.

The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey shows that 3.3m (46.8%) of children and young people (aged 5-16) in England met the Chief Medical Officers' guidance on physical activity in 2018-19. This is an increase of 279,000 since the previous year. However this means that over half do not do enough exercise to benefit their health. The School Sport and Activity Action Plan, published last July, set out government's commitment to tackling this important issue, and ensuring that all children and young people have access to at least 60 minutes of high quality sport and PE every day.

■ **Tourism: Coronavirus**

Scott Benton:

[25200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to support (a) bed and breakfasts, (b) guest houses and (c) hotels in coastal towns in the event of reduced tourism as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are aware that the coronavirus outbreak is impacting businesses across many industries.

I regularly engage with stakeholders in the tourism sector on this developing issue. My Department and VisitBritain have organised two meetings between the industry and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer. I will continue to monitor its impact on tourism businesses across the country and would urge tourism businesses to share information with VisitBritain.

Measures announced in the recent Budget relating to rates relief will also assist SMEs in the hospitality and leisure space.

EDUCATION

■ **Educational Visits: Coronavirus**

Catherine West:

[27040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether financial support is available to schools who have cancelled trips to central Italy as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The latest Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) position advises against all but essential travel to Italy due to the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19. The advice is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy>.

As school trips to Italy would not be deemed essential travel, affected schools should check with their travel providers regarding securing refunds in the first instance. With the current FCO position, all schools signed up to the Risk Protection Arrangement for schools will be covered for any amounts they cannot recoup on trips to Italy, and other affected schools should contact their individual insurance providers.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Wes Streeting: [\[26901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the capital funding requirements for school building improvements at (a) John Bramston Primary School, (b) Little Heath School, (c) Mossford Green Primary School and (d) Ilford County High School in the London Borough of Redbridge.

Nick Gibb:

We have allocated over £7.4 billion in condition funding since 2015 to maintain and improve school buildings. In addition, the Priority School Building Programme is rebuilding or refurbishing school buildings in the worst condition across the country, covering over 500 schools.

Schools and those responsible for school buildings receive condition funding through different routes depending on their size and type. For the financial year 2019-20, Redbridge local authority received a school condition allocation of £5,149,009 to invest in maintaining its schools, including John Bramston Primary School, Little Heath School, Mossford Green Primary School and Ilford County High school. In addition, schools receive their own devolved formula capital allocation to invest in small projects to meet their own priorities.

Since 2015, school condition allocations have been informed by consistent condition data on our school estate. A recently completed Condition Data Collection (CDC) will provide an updated high-level assessment of the condition of state funded schools in England and help inform future funding policy and programmes. The CDC programme visited nearly all state-funded schools in England and a report has been shared with each school.

■ Schools: Uniforms

Steve McCabe: [\[26806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to respond to the findings of Children's Society in its report entitled The Wrong Blazer 2018: Time for action on school uniform costs, published in August 2018, average school uniform costs for (a) secondary and (b) primary school children.

Nick Gibb:

No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to a school of their choice. The Government is pleased to support the Private Members' Bill to 'Make provision for guidance about the cost aspects of school uniform policies' which was introduced to Parliament on 5 February, in order

to make our guidance on the cost considerations for school uniform statutory at the earliest opportunity. This demonstrates the Government's commitment to ensuring that school uniform costs are reasonable and addresses the Children's Society's desire for our guidance to be legally binding.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Airguns: Animals**

Tracey Crouch:

[\[26845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of animals killed by air gun in England since 2015.

Victoria Prentis:

The Department does not hold information on the number of animals killed by this method.

■ **Bees**

Alex Sobel:

[\[26166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the bee population in each year since 2010.

Rebecca Pow:

Each year, the Government publishes an indicator of trends in populations of wild bees and other pollinators in the UK, measuring changes in the distribution of almost 400 pollinating insect species since 1980, including 137 species of bees. The indicator shows an overall long term decline since 1980. However, from 2013 onwards, there is evidence of an overall increase in the distribution of bee species, although other insect pollinators have continued to decline.

The National Bee Unit at Defra also maintains a registration system for honey bees and beekeeping in the UK on its 'BeeBase' website. Registration is voluntary so it is difficult to provide exact figures on honey bee populations, but it suggests that activity in the beekeeping sector and consequently honey bee numbers are increasing. Colonies recorded on BeeBase increased from 108,649 in 2009 to 212,054 in 2019.

Since 2014 we have been working with a range of partners to implement a National Pollinator Strategy to address declines in wild pollinators and concerns about bee health. This has included establishing a UK-wide pollinator monitoring and research partnership in collaboration with research institutes and volunteer organisations to gather further data on the status of UK pollinators.

■ Bees: Yorkshire and the Humber

Alex Sobel:

[26167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) protect and (b) increase the bee population in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Rebecca Pow:

This is a devolved matter, and the information provided relates to England only. Across the country, the Government is investing in protecting, restoring and recovering wildlife-rich habitats and species, including bees and other insects.

This includes securing 75% of our network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) by area in favourable condition by 2042. These sites provide legal protection for our most important wildlife and natural features in England. There are over 4000 SSSIs in England, covering a little over 7% of the country's land area. Yorkshire and the Humber is home to 371 of these sites, covering an area of 187,144 hectares (<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?regionName=YORKSHIRE+%26+HUMBERSIDE&ReportTitle=YORKSHIRE+%26+HUMBERSIDE>).

The Government provides substantial public funding for increasing biodiversity, spending £2.9 billion on agri-environment schemes in England through our seven-year Rural Development Programme. Countryside Stewardship's 'wildlife offers' provide for sources of nectar and pollen for insect pollinators and are now open for applications for agreements starting in 2021. Schemes are tailored to the specific biodiversity interests in Yorkshire and the Humber through local targeting statements (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities>).

We support species recovery through agri-environment schemes and partnership projects. Natural England is working with conservation organisations and landowners on the Back from the Brink programme, a £7.7 million partnership funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and others to put over 100 priority species on the road to recovery. Two Back from the Brink projects operating partly in Yorkshire and the Humber, 'Colour in the Margins' led by Plantlife, and 'Ancients of the Future' led by Buglife, are creating and ensuring the resilience of rich habitats which support bees and other insects.

We have also supported Buglife's 'B-Lines' project, which has produced maps of potential pollinator-friendly habitat across Yorkshire and the Humber and other regions. Our annual Bees' Needs Champions Awards have recognised councils and community groups from across Yorkshire and the Humber for their exemplary work for pollinators.

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

■ **Coronavirus: Supermarkets**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[27004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which supermarkets his Department has met to discuss planning in response to covid-19; and on which dates those meetings took place.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has well-established ways of working with the food industry on potential disruptions to the supply chain. The Secretary of State hosted calls with supermarket Chief Executives on Friday 6 March and Monday 9 March. In addition, officials have held meetings with public affairs and communications leads this week.

■ **Hedgehogs**

Tracey Crouch:

[\[26841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of hedgehogs in (a) Kent, (b) the South East and (c) the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has not made an estimate of hedgehog numbers in the Kent and the South East regions specifically. However, the latest Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals, commissioned by Natural England, estimated that there are around 520,000 in Great Britain.

Defra continues to commend work, including research, by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the People's Trust for Endangered Species, such as their Conservation Strategy for Hedgehogs. Under our 25 Year Environment Plan, we are committed to creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat to provide benefits for species such as the hedgehog. Agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship provide funding to restore, extend and link important habitats and boost food resources for our native species.

■ **Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities: Finance**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[26802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to review the funding arrangements of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Future funding arrangements for Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will be considered alongside departmental budgetary requirements in the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Pesticides

Alex Sobel:

[\[26165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to end the use of synthetic pesticides.

Victoria Prentis:

The sale and use of pesticides are strictly regulated and are only permitted where a rigorous scientific risk assessment determines that the proposed use will not harm people or pose unacceptable risks to the environment.

The Government is clear that it is right to minimise the use of pesticides, and to make the greatest possible use of alternative pest and disease control methods in support of sustainable farming and land management. To this end, as set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government is developing its approach to pesticides, putting Integrated Pest Management at its heart. This will enable us to continue to reduce the impacts of pesticide use and will be set out in our forthcoming National Action Plan for Pesticides.

■ Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949

Caroline Nokes:

[\[26849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what powers his Department has to initiate action under the Prevention of Damage By Pests Act 1949; and in what circumstances those powers have been used.

Caroline Nokes:

[\[26856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many times his Department has used powers under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1945 in each of the last five years.

Victoria Prentis:

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

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

Additionally Defra may give direction to any business involving the manufacture, storage, transport or sale of food. These directions may include:

- prohibiting or restricting the business or use of any premises, vehicles, or equipment which is or is likely to become infested;
- prohibiting or restricting the acceptance, delivery, retention or removal of any infested food or of any other infested goods which are likely to come into contact with food manufactured, stored, transported or sold;
- carrying out any structural works or treatments necessary for preventing or remedying infestation in any premises, vehicle, equipment, food or other goods;

- In cases where the infestation cannot be remedied the Minister may order the food or container to be destroyed within a specific timeframe.

The Department does not have any record of any case where the Minister has had to exercise his powers under the Act in the last five years.

■ **Rivers: Dredging**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[26803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Environment Agency on the merits of dredging rivers; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Bosworth on 3 March 2020, PQ UIN 20056.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Afghanistan: Peace Negotiations**

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[25707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the recent peace deal between the US and the Taliban on the future of Afghanistan.

Nigel Adams:

The UK welcomes the agreement between the US and the Taliban, and the Joint Declaration between the United States and the Afghan government. There is an opportunity for all to come together to work for inclusive and sustainable peace. A political settlement is the only way to achieve lasting stability in Afghanistan and the wider region. It is vital that the next step is a credible and inclusive peace process that protects the progress made in the country, including protection for women and minorities. We continue to support Afghanistan on its path towards a more peaceful and positive future.

■ **Australia: Press Freedom**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[21923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Australian counterpart on press freedom in that country.

James Duddridge:

During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Australia on 6-7 February, he and the Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne discussed our common commitment to shared values, human rights and the international rule of law. As part of the discussions they covered media freedom amongst other areas.

■ Bahrain: Human Rights**Chris Law:** [\[25130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the findings in the report by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy entitled Bahrain human rights report 2020, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding that the human rights situation in Bahrain continued to deteriorate in 2019.

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: Quarantine**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[26989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that UK nationals quarantined overseas are provided with regular information and support.

Nigel Adams:

Our consular and crisis teams headquartered in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been working with experts from Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure our consular teams in Embassies throughout the world are able to provide appropriate information and support to quarantined British nationals in affected areas.

■ Cyprus: Turkey**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[25084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he discussed the illegal occupation of Cyprus during his meeting of 3 March 2020 with Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[25085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he discussed the reunification of Cyprus during his meeting of 3 March 2020 with Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

Wendy Morton:

On 3 March 2020, the Foreign Secretary met with President Erdogan and Foreign Minister Cavusoglu. They discussed a wide range of bilateral and regional issues.

The United Kingdom continues to be a strong supporter of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to reunite Cyprus, based on the internationally accepted model of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality for all. We believe a settlement would bolster the island's security, unlock significant economic benefits and help to advance regional stability. We continue to encourage all parties to engage constructively in talks about a settlement and demonstrate they are committed to making progress.

■ **Greece: Prisoners' Release**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[25042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Greek counterpart on the (a) use and (b) effect on British victims of crime of the Paraskevopoulous law in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned by the effect this law may have on British victims of crime in Greece. The British Ambassador to Athens has discussed the Paraskevopoulos law with Greek Ministers, who have agreed to look into our concerns. British nationals make over 3 million visits to Greece every year. Most visits are trouble-free. We keep our Travel Advice under regular review.

■ **Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review**

Nia Griffith:

[\[26830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2020 to Question 21185 on Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review, whether he plans to publish an update to the Integrated Review and its recommendations in the event that the future UK-EU security partnership is not finalised when the Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review is published.

James Cleverly:

The main bulk of the Integrated Review is expected to conclude in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review later this year, although implementation of its recommendations will be a multi-year project. Unlike a normal Strategic Defence and Security Review the Integrated Review will not be limited to specific departments, objectives or timeframes but will take a holistic approach to our place in the world and how Government is best structured to achieve our objectives.

■ **Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review: Human Rights**

Mohammad Yasin:

[\[25721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, if the Government will take steps to ensure that (a) female human rights defenders, (b) male human rights defenders and (c) the organisations that represent them are consulted as part of the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

James Cleverly:

The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy is the deepest review of the UK's foreign, defence, security and development policy since the end of the Cold War. We will utilise expertise from both inside and outside Government for the review, ensuring the best minds are feeding into its conclusions and challenging traditional Whitehall assumptions and thinking as needed.

The Review will include external consultation with experts and international partners across relevant disciplines.

Iran: Identity Cards**Bob Blackman:**[\[26142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has received on the (a) access to fundamental rights of Iranian citizens who do not have a new digitised ID card and (b) effect of that new system on (i) members of the Baha'i community and (ii) others not recognised under the 1979 constitution; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports that Iran's Baha'i community are being prevented from obtaining identity cards under new rules, depriving them of accessing many basic services. We remain concerned about the continued harassment and mistreatment that the Baha'i and other minority religious groups face. We support the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran's assessment that discrimination against the Baha'is in Iran is sanctioned by a lack of constitutional recognition. We regularly call upon Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to protect freedom of religion or belief to all Iranians.

Israel: West Bank**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[27063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12373 on Israel: West Bank, how many of those (a) pre-fabricated residential, livelihood and agricultural structures and (b) 30 renewable energy systems (i) are still in use and (ii) have been removed or demolished by the Israeli authorities.

James Cleverly:

11.37 per cent of the needs-based and emergency services HMG funds as part of an international consortium helping to provide pre-fabricated residential, livelihood and agricultural structures have been demolished by the Israeli authorities. However, none of the 30 renewable energy systems have been lost as a result of confiscations or demolitions. We are deeply concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question

Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We are keeping the case for compensation under review.

■ **Libya and Sahel: Politics and Government**

Harriett Baldwin:

[25093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 20480 on Libya and Sahel: Politics and Government, which bilateral and multi-lateral programmes he is planning to increase in (a) the Sahel region and (b) Libya.

James Cleverly:

On 25 February, the Minister for Africa attended the first meeting of the Sahel Alliance General Assembly and G5 Leaders' Summit in Mauritania, where he reaffirmed the UK's commitment to increased efforts to improve security and encourage development in the Sahel. The UK is one of the largest humanitarian donors to the region, and provided over £450 million in bilateral humanitarian and development assistance to the Sahel between 2015 and 2019. Last August, we also committed £30million to the Sahel and surrounding countries to support access to education for 100,000 children in crisis areas.

The British Government continues to support Libya through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF), supporting the delivery of greater security and resilience; promoting a more inclusive political dialogue; and boosting economic development. The UK funds a humanitarian programme in Libya focussed on health care and humanitarian coordination. As part of our current £75 million migration programme along the Central Mediterranean Route, we have allocated over £7 million to humanitarian assistance and protection for migrants and refugees in Libya, including targeted healthcare provision. Decisions on future UK funding will be taken in the context of the Spending Review.

■ **North Korea: Human Rights**

Fiona Bruce:

[26883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the UK Government is taking to tackle human rights breaches in North Korea.

Nigel Adams:

We continue to call on the North Korean Government to acknowledge and address the many reports of serious and wide-ranging human rights violations in the country. We delivered a strong statement at North Korea's Universal Periodic Review in May 2019, and we called on the North Korean Government to show the world that freedoms supposedly enshrined in its constitution are not a mirage at the UN General Assembly in October 2019. At the UN Human Rights Council in March, we made clear that the UK stands ready to engage and assist the North Korean Government on human rights issues. We also raise our concerns bilaterally through our Embassy

in Pyongyang and the North Korean Embassy in London. The Foreign Secretary is looking forward to engaging further with the right honourable MP and the All Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea on this issue.

■ **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[27064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12373 on Israel: West Bank, whether the allocated funding has been provided (a) directly as part of UK aid or (b) indirectly through (i) ECHO or (ii) other EU aid programmes.

James Cleverly:

The allocated funding has been provided directly as part of UK aid. Our assistance supports a stable Palestinian Authority (PA) which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel and can deliver essential services to Palestinians. UK Aid to the PA supports the provision of education and health services in the West Bank and provides technical assistance to strengthen the PA's financial management. In 2018/19 it helped pay the salaries of 37,600 teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives and other health and education workers, enabling 26,000 Palestinians to get an education (50 per cent girls), 3,300 MMR vaccinations for children, and 111,000 medical consultations. UK aid also helps improve water and electricity services in the West Bank and across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[27065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much funding the UK has provided to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (a) directly and (b) indirectly through EU aid programmes in each of the last three years.

James Cleverly:

UK spending on Overseas Development Assistance is detailed in the annual Statistics on International Development. Spending in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) for calendar years 2016-2018 is detailed below. This includes all UK assistance in the OPTs, and for Palestinian refugees across the region, through our support to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). EU support to the OPTs, available from the OECD, is also detailed in the below grid. This does not include the majority of EU support to UNRWA, which is captured separately. Approximately 15 per cent of EU spending on humanitarian and development assistance is attributable to the UK.

YEAR	2016	2017	2018
UK ODA (inc. all UNRWA funding)*	£77.2m	£112.5m	£114.8m
EU bilateral spend (approx.)**	£320m	£225m	£226m

YEAR	2016	2017	2018
15% UK imputed share of EU bilateral spend (approx.)		£34m	£34m

EU figures calculated using current exchange rates

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>

** <https://stats.oecd.org/>

■ Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Emily Thornberry: [\[25040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Saudi Arabian counterpart on the matter of upcoming executions in that country.

James Cleverly:

The former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised our concerns about the death penalty with Deputy Justice Minister HE Abdullah Al Sulaimi on 11 February. The British Government opposes the death penalty in all circumstances and in every country. Our position is understood by the Saudi authorities. We are particularly concerned over use of the death penalty for juveniles and crimes other than the most serious. This is in line with the minimum standards set out in the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty of 2008, provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

■ Saudi Arabia: Violence

Emily Thornberry: [\[25039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Saudi Arabian counterpart on the matter of violence against women in that country.

James Cleverly:

Women's rights in Saudi Arabia still fall short of international standards. The Foreign Secretary raised our concerns about the ongoing detention of political detainees, including women's rights defenders, during his visit to Riyadh on 4 and 5 March. We will continue to raise concerns.

■ Syria: Armed Conflict

Catherine West: [\[26966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to encourage de-escalation in northern Syria.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the agreement for a ceasefire in north-east Syria reached by Russia and Turkey on 5 March. We have continually advocated for de-escalation in Idlib, and we will work to make the ceasefire permanent. Our priority is to end the conflict in Syria through a negotiated political settlement, in accordance with UNSCR 2254. We are active in pressing for de-escalation in Idlib, including by calling for an emergency UN Security Council discussion on 28 February. The Foreign Secretary also offered his support for Turkish efforts to secure a ceasefire in the north-west during his visit to Turkey on 3-4 March.

■ Tourists: Elephants**Tracey Crouch:**[\[25071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of British tourists that travelled to holiday destinations with attractions involving Asian elephants in each year since 2015.

Nigel Adams:

We do not hold information centrally on British tourists visiting attractions abroad involving Asian elephants.

■ Turkey: Cyprus**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[25087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the legality under international law of Turkey violating Cyprus' maritime economic zone by drilling south of the island.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has repeatedly expressed our opposition to Turkish drilling plans in the waters around Cyprus. We have consistently stated our support for the sovereign right of the Republic of Cyprus to exploit the oil and gas in its internationally agreed Exclusive Economic Zone. We also continue to attach the utmost importance to securing a long-term settlement to the division of Cyprus and believe the most enduring way of resolving difficult issues such as this is to achieve a Cyprus settlement. We encourage all parties to redouble their efforts in pursuit of this.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Cancer: Radiotherapy****Henry Smith:**[\[25076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the capacity of radiotherapy services to be able to cope with anticipated future demand created by improved early cancer diagnosis.

Jo Churchill:

A capacity planning exercise in England, run by NHS England and NHS Improvement, modelled radiotherapy activity levels over a five year period and it is expected that there will be 1 – 2% increase in referral to radiotherapy. In practice this level of growth remains relatively stable and is regularly monitored in conjunction with service providers.

■ Cancer: Research**Wes Streeting:** [\[26895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he has allocated to research on (a) childhood cancers and (b) diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma.

Wes Streeting: [\[26897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of ring-fencing funding for childhood cancer research.

Helen Whately:

Research is crucial in the fight against cancer. The Department invests £1 billion per year in health research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR's cancer research expenditure has risen from £101 million in 2010/11 to £132 million in 2018/19, the largest investment in a disease area.

In May 2018 the Government announced £40 million over five years for brain tumour research as part of the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission. This includes funding for childhood cancers research and diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma.

Additionally, for the period 2014/15 – 2018/19, the NIHR have undertaken 35 projects into childhood cancer totalling approximately £13.3million.

As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not generally allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, such as childhood cancers and diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

■ Cerebral Palsy**Greg Smith:** [\[25196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what training is provided on cerebral palsy to (a) education and (b) health practitioners.

Helen Whately:

For education practitioners, governing boards are required to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions, and to have regard to the statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school'.

For health practitioners, general practice play a key role in the identification of disorders such as cerebral palsy, and the condition is identified as a key area of clinical knowledge in the Royal College of General Practitioners curriculum.

■ Coronavirus: Health Services

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[26820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to facilitate the temporary return to work of recently retired NHS staff in the event of an outbreak of covid-19.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service is working with its professional leads, regulators, NHS employers and the Department to set out how it engages with retirees and leavers who are willing to return to work for a period of time to provide the extra capacity we need to meet the demands of COVID-19.

The NHS has been developing with stakeholders, a clear and straight forward re-registration process including simplified employment checks. This will also include how it assesses if individuals are fit to work and the employment contract and terms and conditions. The NHS is also identifying what training is required to support returners as well as developing guidance to help employers engage these staff and to provide advice and support to all staff through this period.

■ Coronavirus: Overseas Visitors

Kate Green:

[R] [26943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to suspend NHS charges for secondary care for non-EEA visitors who require hospital treatment for covid-19 after their arrival in the UK.

Edward Argar:

Novel coronavirus COVID-19 has been added to Schedule 1 of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations.

This means, as for any other infectious disease in Schedule 1, there can be no charge made to an overseas visitor for the diagnosis, or, if positive, treatment, of this coronavirus.

No charge applies to a diagnostic test even if the result is negative. Also, no charge can apply to any treatment provided up to the point that it is negatively diagnosed.

Kate Green:

[R] [26944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether non-EEA visitors to the UK who are required to undergo testing for covid-19 will receive that test free of charge.

Edward Argar:

Novel coronavirus COVID-19 has been added to Schedule 1 of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations.

This means that, as for any other infectious disease in Schedule 1, there can be no charge made to an overseas visitor for the diagnosis or treatment, of this coronavirus.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Christian Wakeford:

[25215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to create a vaccine for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Supported by United Kingdom funding, a number of potential COVID-19 vaccines are currently under development and efforts are being made to get any viable vaccines from sequencing of the virus to clinical testing in under a year. Governments around the world could then work with pharmaceutical companies to get vaccines into production and use.

As of 6 March, the UK's total investment into COVID-19 vaccine research stands at £65 million.

This includes a £50 million contribution to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

■ **Dementia: Health Services**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[25174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued on patient-centred care for patients with (a) Alzheimer's disease and (b) dementia to (i) NHS trusts and (ii) providers of care; and what steps his Department takes to ensure that care practices for those patients take account of the effect of those diseases on a patient's ability to respond to questions.

Helen Whately:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published a guideline on 'Dementia: assessment, management and support' for people living with dementia and their carers in 2018. It includes recommendations on involving people in decisions about their care and offering early and ongoing opportunities to discuss advance statement about their wishes, preferences, beliefs and values regarding their future care. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng97>

Commissioned by NHS England, the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health published 'The Dementia Care Pathway: full implementation guidance' in July 2018. It includes support for providers, commissioners and sustainability and transformation partnerships in providing personalised care for people with dementia and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/dementia/implementation-guide-and-resource-pack-for-dementia-care/>

■ East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust: Nurses

Antony Higginbotham:

[25207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurses there are in East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust; and how many of those nurses were recruited in each year since 2010.

Helen Whately:

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

As at November 2019, the latest available data, there are 2,323 nurses and health visitors at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, headcount.

The following table shows the number of nurses and health visitors joiners for the period specified to East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, headcount.

	NURSES AND HEALTH VISITOR JOINERS
November 2010 - 2011	513
November 2011 – 2012	189
November 2012 – 2013	295
November 2013 – 2014	291
November 2014 – 2015	287
November 2015 – 2016	296
November 2016 – 2017	324
November 2017 – 2018	246
November 2018 - 2019	349

■ Giant Cell Arteritis

Gareth Thomas:

[25004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people with Giant Cell Arteritis who lost their vision as a result of a late diagnosis, in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold information about the number of people with Giant Cell Arteritis who lost their vision as a result of a late diagnosis.

Gareth Thomas:

[25005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise awareness amongst GPs of Giant Cell Arteritis to allow early diagnosis and treatment.

Jo Churchill:

Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA) is one of over 6,000 rare diseases. There are no bespoke measures in place to raise awareness of GCA amongst general practitioners (GPs), however, steps to increase awareness of rare conditions such as Giant Cell Arteritis, and improve outcomes for those living with rare diseases are being taken through the implementation of the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rare-diseases-strategy>

Measures include, for example, the UK Rare Diseases Forum via its digital platform and an annual conference. The recent 'national conversation on rare diseases' survey, sought views from the rare diseases community to understand the major challenges faced by those living and working with rare diseases. Results of the survey will be fed into the development of a new post-2020 Framework to build on the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases.

■ Human Papillomavirus: Screening

Crispin Blunt:

[24994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether human papillomavirus screening is able to identify specific strains of that virus.

Crispin Blunt:

[24996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination status of the patient will be recorded under the new HPV primary screening programme.

Jo Churchill:

Human papillomavirus (HPV) testing is the primary screening test used in the National Health Service Cervical Screening Programme. This can be reviewed at the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/human-papilloma-virus-hpv/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cervical-screening-programme-overview>

While there are many different types of HPV, the screening programme in England uses tests to detect for HPV 16, 18 and several other high-risk HPV types. HPV 16 and 18 are the two most common high-risk strains of HPV that are found in 99.8% of cervical cancer cases. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/cervical-cancer/risk-factors#heading-Two>.

The results from a HPV screen test will indicate to the individual whether they are HPV positive or negative and the next steps.

HPV infection is very common and most abnormalities that develop as a result will clear themselves without intervention or treatment.

■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

Crispin Blunt: [\[24995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps Public Health England plans to take to assess the effectiveness of the HPV vaccination programme.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) is conducting surveillance activities to monitor the effectiveness of the National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Programme. The current HPV vaccine protects against two high-risk HPV types, HPV16 and HPV18 which cause around 80% of cervical cancers in the United Kingdom and two low-risk HPV types, HPV6 and HPV11 which cause most genital warts.

Surveillance conducted among young sexually active women in England has compared changes in the number of women who have a HPV infection over time since the introduction of the HPV vaccination.

■ Maternity Services: Foreign Nationals

Stephen Timms: [\[26800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of charging for maternity services on the willingness of pregnant women without indefinite leave to remain to access NHS services.

Edward Argar:

The Department is committed to continually consider evidence it receives in relation to the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015.

The Department's guidance to National Health Service trusts is that all maternity treatment must be provided to any chargeable woman, regardless of her ability to pay, and that they must not be discouraged from receiving it.

■ Medicine: Education

Afzal Khan: [\[25189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of medical school places.

Helen Whately:

The Government has committed to funding an extra 1,500 undergraduate medical school places per year at English universities by 2020/21 - a 25% increase, taking the total number of medical school training places in England to 7,500 each year by 2020/21. Five new medical schools will open to help deliver the expansion in Edge Hill, Sunderland, Chelmsford, Lincoln and Canterbury by September 2020.

The final NHS People Plan will be released in 2020 and will set out how the National Health Service will recruit and retain a well-skilled workforce. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working closely with Health Education England to provide a sustainable pipeline of undergraduate medical students as a part of the final NHS People Plan.

■ Mental Health Services: Civil Proceedings

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[26835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what legal recourse is available to medicated patients in mental health facilities who believe that they may have been administered with excessive medication.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[26836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there are safeguards in place to ensure that the medication that autistic patients receive at mental health facilities is (a) not excessive and (b) in line with NHS STOMP-STAMP guidance.

Helen Whately:

Patients have the right, set out in the NHS Constitution, to make a complaint about any aspect of National Health Service care, treatment or services and to have that complaint properly investigated.

The NHS complaints procedure, including the process for investigating and responding to a complaint, is set out in secondary legislation, primarily the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint can do so either to the service provider or to the commissioner. If they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to investigate.

Care and Treatment Reviews (CTRs), and Care, Education and Treatment Reviews (CETRs) for the under 18s, are undertaken for anyone with learning disabilities, autism or both who may be at risk of admission to, or who is already in, a specialist learning disability or mental health hospital.

The purpose of the CTR, or CETR, is to ensure that an individual's care and treatment is still meeting their needs and both CTRs and CETRs will assess whether medication is being used appropriately and that steps are being taken to minimise the use of any psychotropic medication. The review team, which is led by the responsible commissioner with support from independent expert advisers who bring additional challenge to the process, will make recommendations to improve the individual's care with follow-up checks to ensure that this is happening.

■ Mumps

Chris Green: [25128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of mumps cases in England in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has published annual data on the number of laboratory confirmed mumps cases from 1996 to 2019 at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-confirmed-cases/confirmed-cases-of-measles-mumps-and-rubella-in-england-and-wales-2012-to-2013>

Provisional PHE data show that there were 5,042 lab-confirmed cases of mumps in England in 2019, compared to 1,066 cases in 2018. This is the highest number of cases since 2009. The rise in cases looks set to continue in 2020, with over 1,000 confirmed cases in January 2020 compared to 191 during the same period in 2019. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mumps-outbreaks-across-england>

The steep rise in cases in 2019 has been largely driven by outbreaks in universities and colleges. Many of the cases in 2019 were seen in the so-called 'Wakefield cohorts' – young adults born in the late nineties and early 2000s who missed out on the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine when they were children. These cohorts are now old enough to attend college and university and are likely to continue fuelling mumps outbreaks into 2020. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mumps-confirmed-cases/mumps-confirmed-cases-in-england-and-wales-by-age-and-region-2012-to-2013>

■ NHS 111: Staff

Layla Moran: [25187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 20040, NHS 111: Staff, how many (a) NHS staff, (b) contract staff and (c) volunteers his Department plans to recruit to the NHS 111 service to help mitigate the impact of covid-19.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 9 March 2020]: The National Health Service will be given the resources it needs to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak. Around 500 additional call handlers have already been trained to staff the NHS 111 service, representing an increase of 20%. In addition, the new NHS 111 online service is also available to provide advice and will free up call handlers' time, so they are able to prioritise those experiencing symptoms.

■ NHS: Training

Zarah Sultana: [\[26188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS bursary will be paid retrospectively to students who did not receive that funding between 2017 and 2020.

Helen Whately:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for St Helens North (Conor McGinn MP) on 27 February 2020 to Question [19994](#).

■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment

Henry Smith: [\[25077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of linear accelerator radiotherapy machines in use by NHS trusts that are past the recommended 10-year lifespan; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement produced a stocktake, which included age, of linear accelerators in full clinical use in 2016 as part of the Equipment Modernisation programme. Further work to update this stocktake is underway to reflect both the impact of the Equipment Modernisation programme and any local changes.

■ Smoking: Pregnancy

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[26821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the current prevalence rate of women smoking during pregnancy; and what assessment he has made of the likelihood of reducing that prevalence to 6 per cent by the end of 2022.

Jo Churchill:

In 2018/19 the prevalence of smoking in pregnant women was 10.6%.

The Government has a track record of reducing the harms caused by tobacco and is committed to achieving its ambition to reduce smoking in pregnancy to 6% or less by 2022.

■ Social Services: Coronavirus

Mr Stephen Morgan: [\[27019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to support local authorities in training adult social care staff on reducing the spread of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

The Department is working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, local authorities and providers to make sure the sector is prepared to reduce the risk of harm to people in receipt of adult social care.

The Department will be issuing updated guidance to councils and social care providers this week - which will also include advice on coping with staff sickness and visiting relatives in care homes.

Mr Stephen Morgan:**[27020]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the risk of harm from covid-19 to people in receipt of adult social care.

Helen Whately:

The Government has launched a new public information campaign to help the public understand the risks of the virus and how they can protect themselves.

Public Health England has outlined information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 within the Guidance for social or community care and residential settings which is available to view at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19#signs-and-symptoms-of-covid-19>

Mr Stephen Morgan:**[27021]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk of social care workers who visit multiple social care recipients in one day spreading covid-19; and will he make a statement.

Helen Whately:

We have published guidance for schools, employers, first responders, social care and the travel industry on how to handle suspected cases of COVID-19, which is available at the following link:

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

Public Health England has also provided guidance for social care providers giving advice on how to help prevent the spread of illness and what they should do if potential cases do present. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

■ Speech and Language Therapy: Recruitment**Steve McCabe:****[26805]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's news story entitled National recruitment campaign for paramedics,

radiographers and nurses begins published on 3 March 2020, what plans he has to recruit more speech and language therapists.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS People Plan, due to be published by the National Health Service in 2020, will set out a clear framework for growing and sustaining a well-skilled workforce across the whole NHS. As of November 2019 there were 6,284 full time equivalent speech and language therapists in England, this is a 5% increase since 2016.

In December 2019 the Government announced additional maintenance grant funding of at least £5,000 per academic year for students studying most allied health professions, including speech and language therapy. In addition, students with child dependents will benefit from an extra £1,000.

■ **Vaccination**

Chris Green:

[25681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the availability of GP appointments on rates of vaccination in England.

Jo Churchill:

Access to general practitioner (GP) appointments is key to good vaccination uptake and coverage. The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 committed to improve access to primary care through a range of initiatives including more healthcare staff working in and with GP practices where many patients receive their vaccinations. As part of this work, there has been a national review of access to general practice services that commenced in July 2019 and will complete in 2020, which has already informed contract discussions for 2020/21. The results of these discussions were published in February 2020 as part of the updated GP contract deal for 2020/21 which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/investment/gp-contract/>

One of these actions relates to developing a nationally consistent extended access offer reflecting what works best in existing local schemes.

■ **Vaccination: Children**

Chris Green:

[25682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on national health of the Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics for England 2018-19.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) monitors trends in the level of childhood vaccination rates.

Although vaccination rates remain high, England has seen a small decline in coverage since 2013. The most recent figures, published in December 2019, show

that vaccine coverage increased slightly compared to the last quarter for most routine vaccines measured at 12 months, representing vaccines administered recently. This increase in vaccination rates is for the second quarter in a row, and although it is always difficult to draw conclusions from small variations in the quarterly data, we look forward to this trend continuing in future reports.

This data can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cover-of-vaccination-evaluated-rapidly-cover-programme-2019-to-2020-quarterly-data>

HOME OFFICE

■ Animal Experiments

Kerry McCarthy:

[25032]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Animals in Science Regulation Unit is taking to encourage the replacement of the use of animals in scientific procedures.

Victoria Atkins:

The steps that the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) takes to encourage the replacement of the use of animals in scientific procedures are part of a wider strategy on the rigorous application of the 3Rs principles – replacement, reduction and refinement.

Procedures on animals are only authorised after an assessment process, which is undertaken by the Home Office Inspectorate. All project licence applicants are required to describe and justify why available non-animal alternative methodologies could not be used to achieve their scientific objectives.

In 2018 ASRU signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Centre for the 3Rs (NC3Rs) to support the uptake of 3Rs approaches. The NC3Rs leads the discovery and application of new technologies and approaches to replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in scientific procedures. ASRU supports the NC3Rs drive to accelerate the development and use of models and tools, based on the latest science and technologies, to address important scientific questions without the use of animals.

■ Asylum: Children

Dr Matthew Offord:

[13965]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on family reunion for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

Chris Philp:

The Government remains resolutely committed to the principle of family reunion.

The UK will cease to participate in EU instruments at the end of the Transition Period, including the Dublin Regulation. This means that the ability of unaccompanied children to use Dublin to reunite with family will end, unless a replacement agreement is negotiated. The Government has been clear that it is committed to seeking such an agreement with the EU, thereby ensuring these children can continue to reunite with family at the end of the Transition Period. The Home Secretary wrote to the European Commission on 22 October to begin negotiations.

The UK will continue to be bound by the Dublin Regulation provisions during the Transition Period, allowing us to continue to transfer family reunion cases to the UK throughout 2020, and we will continue to process all family reunion requests that have been submitted but not completed under Dublin before the end of the Transition Period.

■ **Asylum: Children in Care**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[26809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the provision of adequate resources to support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the care system.

Chris Philp:

We recognise that local authorities undertake incredibly valuable work in looking after vulnerable young asylum seekers and the Home Office is committed to supporting this.

The Home Office provides funding to local authorities as a contribution to the costs they incur when supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), which is in addition to the money provided through the local government finance settlement.

In May 2019, we announced a significant increase in the funding: from 1 April 2019, local authorities now receive £114 per UASC per night for each UASC in their care, regardless of their age or when they entered the UK. This represented a 61% increase to the lowest rate that was previously paid. As well as providing a greater contribution to local authorities support costs, these changes addressed feedback that the existing rate structure was overly complex.

Further consideration is being given to funding rates for local authorities supporting UASC and former UASC care leavers following the recent Spending Round. We will continue to keep these rates under consideration.

■ **Biometric Residence Permits**

Kevin Brennan:

[\[26818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the (a) average and (b) longest length of time taken from a visa application being issued to the receipt of a Biometric Residence Permit card under the priority service.

Kevin Brennan:

[\[26819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Biometric Residence Permit cards applied for under the priority service are issued within her Department's target time.

Kevin Foster:

For visa applicants, their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) will usually be available for collection either from their local Post Office or Alternative Collection Location (ACL) according to their chosen method and location of collection which they indicated during the application process. Applicants are advised to allow 10 days on arrival in the UK before attending their designated Post Office or ACL to collect their BRP. Both locations will usually hold the BRP for up to 60 days before returning to the Home Office if uncollected. Figures are not kept in relation to the length of time it takes a visa holder to collect their BRP.

Figures are not held in a way which enable us to differentiate between BRPs that were produced and issued under standard or priority services. The production of the BRP does not form part of the service level for the consideration of standard, priority or super priority applications. This is made clear at point of application. The service level for these services only relates to the length of time in which a decision will be made on an application. It is made clear that applicants should allow 10 working days for the BRP to be delivered once notification of the decision to grant leave has been sent.

Once a decision to grant leave is approved and received by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), which produce the BRP on behalf of the Home Office, they have an SLA to personalise 90% of BRPs within one working day of receipt and the remaining 10% within two working days of receipt. They have never failed to meet this service standard.

■ **British National (Overseas): Hong Kong**

Steve Double:

[\[18820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many British National Overseas passport holders there were in Hong Kong in each year since the introduction of that category of passport; whether she plans to review the rights afforded to those passport holders; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

We are unable to provide data on the volume of British National (Overseas) passports in circulation (valid) prior to 31 December 2015 as the data could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

We do not hold data on the number of British National Overseas passport holder's resident in Hong Kong. The table below contains information on the number of British National (Overseas) passports in circulation from 2015 to 2019.

YEAR	NATIONALITY DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF PASSPORTS (VOLUME)
31 December 2015	British National (Overseas)	143,219
31 December 2016	British National (Overseas)	152,351
31 December 2017	British National (Overseas)	158,107
31 December 2018	British National (Overseas)	169,653
31 December 2019	British National (Overseas)	314,779

BN(O) status is part of the delicate balance in negotiations that led to the Sino-British Joint Declaration. We believe it would not be right to change the legal status of BN(O)s at this point in time.

■ **Crime: Exploitation**

Neil Coyle:

[26900]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Queen's Speech December 2019 Background Briefing Notes, whether she plans to include a statutory definition of criminal exploitation in the Serious Violence Bill.

Kit Malthouse:

The Queen's Speech set out an ambitious package of reforms to deliver on the people's priorities, to tackle violent crime and to safeguard people's streets and neighbourhoods. This includes the introduction of the Serious Violence Bill. The Bill will create a new legal duty on a range of local agencies, including the police, councils and local health bodies, to prevent and reduce serious violence. It will also introduce new court orders, which will make it easier for the police to stop and search those convicted of knife and offensive weapon offences, and prevent them from carrying knives on our streets.

The Bill and draft guidance for local agencies will be published in due course.

■ **Detention Centres: Coronavirus**

Kate Green:

[R] [26945]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to minimise the risk of covid-19 spreading to vulnerable groups in immigration removal centres.

Kevin Foster:

All immigration removal centres have communicable disease contingency plans, based on guidance published by Public Health England. These plans are tested on a regular basis.

Measures such as protective isolation will be considered to minimise the risk of Covid-19 spreading to vulnerable groups in the immigration detention estate.

■ Domestic Abuse

Jess Phillips: [\[25675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the statutory duties in the Domestic Abuse Bill will include the provision of (a) frontline services in the community, (b) Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors and other specialist support services and (c) accommodation-based services for children and young people.

Victoria Atkins:

The Domestic Abuse Bill, as introduced on 3 March, includes a new statutory duty on tier one local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse, and their children, within safe accommodation. Paragraph 207 of the Explanatory Notes which accompany the Bill provides examples of the support that may be provided, including specialist support for victims with protected characteristics and/or complex needs.

In the Government's further response to the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill (CP 214), also published on 3 March, we indicated that the Domestic Abuse Commissioner has agreed to undertake an in-depth exploration of the current community-based support landscape. The Government will then work with the Commissioner to understand the needs identified and develop options on how best to address them.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Alison Thewliss: [\[26917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) she and (b) Ministers of her Department have visited a medically supervised drug consumption room in the last six months.

Kit Malthouse:

Home Office Ministers have not visited a medically supervised drug consumption room in the last six months.

■ Flakka

Jim Shannon: [\[19871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to prevent the (a) sale and (b) use of the drug flakka.

Kit Malthouse:

"Flakka" is a street name for some cathinones. Cathinones and related compounds are controlled under Class B of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and it is an offence to possess, supply or produce them. Tough enforcement is a fundamental part of our approach to tackling drugs and we are working across Government to address the

drivers behind drug-related crime and help prevent further substance misuse and offending.

The UK Drugs Summit took place on 27 February. The Summit brought together all four nations of the United Kingdom to consider the challenges we are facing and to reflect on what more can be done to address drug supply and reduce drug harms. The Prime Minister has also established a Cabinet committee on crime which will help to drive cross-Government action in this area.

The Government is taking action to reduce demand for drugs, and to build recovery and treatment to tackle harmful substances such as these. We are investing in evidence-based programmes to prevent young people using drugs, for example, we support Rise Above, an online resilience building resource aimed at 11 to 16-year-olds, and FRANK, the national drugs information and advice service.

■ Hate Crime

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[18670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the College of Policing's operational guidance for investigating and recording allegations of non-crime hate incidents.

Kit Malthouse:

The College of Policing is independent from Government and its role is clear: setting high professional standards; sharing what works best; acting as the national voice of policing; and ensuring police training and ethics is of the highest possible quality.

The College of Policing has recently consulted on revised operational guidance on hate crime, which the College plans to publish in due course to support forces dealing with hate crimes and hate incidents.

■ Home Office: Clearview AI

Darren Jones:

[\[25178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has (a) live and (b) historic contracts with (i) Clearview AI and (ii) subsidiaries of that company.

Victoria Atkins:

Our records show that the Home Office has no (a) live or (b) historic contracts with (i) Clearview AI or (ii) the 2 identified subsidiaries, Smartcheckr or Insight Camera.

■ Human Trafficking: Children

Steve Reed:

[\[26949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children have an independent child trafficking guardian.

Victoria Atkins:

Last year, the Government successfully expanded Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) to one third of local authorities.

An evaluation of the ICTG service within the early adopter sites was published in July 2019 and can be found

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819723/evaluation-independent-child-trafficking-guardians-final-horr111.pdf.

This evaluation was conducted on the service provided in the three initial sites of Greater Manchester, Hampshire and Wales between February 2017 and January 2019. Over this time period, 445 children were referred to the ICTG service.

Later this year the Home Office will publish its next evaluation of the ICTG service, which will provide further updates on outcomes of the service including the number of children it supports.

■ Immigrants: Croydon

Steve Reed:

[12897]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of children whose parents have no recourse to public funds that live in (a) Croydon North constituency and (b) the London Borough of Croydon.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not hold the data requested and information on the UK's resident population is a matter for the independent Office for National Statistics. The no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition is applied to the leave of most migrants in the UK as a legitimate means of maintaining and protecting our economic resources.

In those cases where leave has been, or is being, granted for family or private life reasons the NRPF condition can be lifted on application to the Home Office, including for reasons involving the welfare needs of children. In addition, immigration legislation specifically provides for assessments of child welfare needs to take place and support to be provided by a local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

■ Immigrants: Health Services

John Spellar:

[25621]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to undertake a review of the immigration health surcharge for people with leave to remain who are in employment.

Kevin Foster:

It is a migrant's immigration status that determines whether or not they pay the immigration health surcharge, not their tax contributions or their profession.

As set out in our election manifesto, the Surcharge will be further increased to ensure affected migrants broadly cover the cost of NHS services provided to them. Detailed plans for implementing this will be set out shortly.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Mohammad Yasin:

[\[22020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether EU citizens that are awarded pre-settled status will have the same entitlement to benefits after the transition period as they do now.

Kevin Foster:

EU citizens and their family members who have obtained pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme will continue to access benefits on the same basis and according to the same rules as they do now.

This means EU citizens will still need to demonstrate they are exercising a qualifying right to reside, for example as a worker, in order to access taxpayer funded benefits, such as Universal Credit. This will continue until their pre-settled status expires or until they are granted settled status.

■ Immigration: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[18934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraphs 13-15 of Annex A of the document entitled New Decade, New Approach, published in January 2020, what the timeframe is for bringing forward legislative proposals on family migration arrangements for people in Northern Ireland.

Stephen Farry:

[\[18935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraphs 13-15 of Annex A of the document entitled New Decade, New Approach, published in January 2020, whether people in Northern Ireland will be able to permanently access rights to family reunification that are broadly equivalent to those available to Irish citizens in the UK under EEA Regulations.

Stephen Farry:

[\[18936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of Article 1 (vi) of the Good Friday Agreement on (a) the legal status of people in Northern Ireland who identify as (i) Irish, (ii) British and (iii) both and (b) their related entitlement to be recognised as such.

Kevin Foster:

Article 1 (vi) of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement sets out the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British as they may so choose, and confirms their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship. In line with this commitment, the people of Northern Ireland are legally able to hold British or Irish citizenship, or both.

The reciprocal Common Travel Area arrangements between the UK and Ireland ensure the people of Northern Ireland are not required to choose and assert an

identity, or to align their citizenship with their choice of identity, in order to access public services and other entitlements in the UK.

As set out in the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, the Home Office intends to change the UK's Immigration Rules so family members of the people of Northern Ireland can apply for immigration status on broadly the same terms as family members of Irish citizens and will open this route as soon as delivery allows. We aim to do this before the end of the year.

The Rules change will enable the people of Northern Ireland to bring their family members to the UK on broadly the same basis as family members of Irish citizens who have entry and residence rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

Where family members of Irish citizens are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement (for example, because the Irish citizen moved to the UK after the end of the transition period) they will, as now, be able to apply for immigration status under the UK's family Immigration Rules. Family members of the people of Northern Ireland in an analogous position will also be subject to those Rules.

■ Migrant Workers

Helen Hayes:

[26909]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of the proposed points-based immigration system on workforce levels in the (a) NHS, (b) the care sector and (c) hospitality sector.

Kevin Foster:

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

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

To further facilitate the migration of skilled workers to support the NHS, we will create a new NHS visa for certain medical professionals with a confirmed job offer supporting the NHS – reducing their visa fees and providing support to come to the UK with their families.

Skilled hospitality workers and senior care workers who meet the relevant criteria will be able to come to the UK through the points-based system.

■ Migrant Workers: Service Industries

Sir Roger Gale:

[19728]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the additional costs to be borne by the (a) catering and (b) hospitality industries as a result of the Government's proposals to limit low-skilled workers from (i) the EU and (ii) overseas.

Sir Roger Gale:

[19729]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure an adequate supply of labour for the (i) catering and (ii) hospitality industries after the introduction of controls on low-skilled workers from the (A) EU and (B) overseas.

Kevin Foster:

This Government will reduce lower skilled migration. Free movement is ending, and we will not simply replicate it in a future system.

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

Employers need to focus on investing in the people already here and make jobs more attractive for UK workers.

Businesses can continue to be able to rely on those EU/EEA nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status and those who come to the UK through youth mobility schemes.

We are also committed to quadrupling the Seasonal Workers scheme for agriculture for non EEA nationals from 2,500 to 10,000 places.

As the future system is developed we will continue to engage with stakeholders from a range of industries and take advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

■ **National Wildlife Crime Unit: Finance**

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[18632]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will allocate long-term funding to the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office will be providing specific funding of £136,000 to support the work of the National Wildlife Crime Unit in 2020/21. This will be in addition to specific funding for the Unit provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the funding central Government will be providing police forces in England and Wales to tackle all types of crime, including wildlife crime.

Decisions about Home Office funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit beyond March 2021 will be taken as part of the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Offences against Children: Internet

Alex Norris:

[13537]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the prevalence of online live-streaming of the sexual exploitation of children that originates from (a) the UK and (b) other countries.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government set out in the Serious Organised Crime Strategy 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-and-organised-crime-strategy-2018> that companies must be at the forefront of efforts to deny offenders access to children and child sexual abuse material via their platforms and services, and that a priority area is to stop the live streaming of child sexual abuse.

The National Crime Agency's National Strategic Assessment 2018 <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/173-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-and-organised-crime-2018/file> described self-broadcast live-streaming as a growing concern, with 1 in 8 teens having broadcast on Instagram and 1 in 10 on Facebook. Children were then being coerced and extorted into streaming child abuse content. Such images can be harvested and redistributed leading to blackmail and extortion for further images. The NCA has assessed in the National Strategic Assessment 2019 <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/296-national-strategic-assessment-of-serious-organised-crime-2019/file> that livestreaming is a key threat, with some UK offenders paying overseas facilitators to abuse children.

The 2019 WePROTECT Global Alliance global threat assessment [global threat assessment http://www2.paconsulting.com/rs/526-HZE-833/images/WePROTECT%202019%20Global%20Threat%20Assessment%20%28FINAL%29.pdf](http://www2.paconsulting.com/rs/526-HZE-833/images/WePROTECT%202019%20Global%20Threat%20Assessment%20%28FINAL%29.pdf) on demonstrates the nature, scale and complexity of online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The assessment outlined that technology increasingly enables the live streaming of child sexual abuse material.

■ Organised Crime: Rural Areas

Alicia Kearns:

[19990]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of prioritising police resources on tackling organised crime in rural areas.

Kit Malthouse:

It is the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to ensure that the police priorities reflect those of their communities and that resources are deployed accordingly.

■ Passports: Kurds

Hilary Benn:

[\[25024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Iraqi Kurds have had their passports confiscated on grounds of identity in each of the last five years; and how many of those Iraqi Kurds have since had their passports returned.

Kevin Foster:

The data below relates to applications where Iraq was provided as the place of birth on the UK passport application. The figures relate to the year in which a passport was revoked, because it was determined that there was no entitlement to a passport. The reasons for this in individual cases would include concerns around the person's identity.

2015	5
2016	1
2017	7
2018	41
2019	116

In 4 of these cases a subsequent passport has been issued in the same identity.

■ Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

Claudia Webbe:

[\[23483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what funding is available to support security and safety in and around mosques; and if she will make a statement.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[23609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding she has allocated to public safety in and around mosques in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[23610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to increase funding for security in and around mosques in response to the Hanau terrorist attack on 19 February 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

In addition to the 134 grants already provided over the first three years of the Places of Worship scheme, the Government have announced a further commitment of £1.6m funding for the Places of Worship Scheme this financial year and are further doubling the available funding in 2020-21. We will shortly be announcing the outcome of the

fourth year of the scheme, which will see over fifty organisations receive funding to enhance the security of their premises.

The police regularly review events and potential threats to ensure everything is being done to protect all our communities from terrorism, hate crime and the impact of public protest. The Government also has an established programme that provides those responsible for crowded places with high quality advice and guidance, to enable them to understand the terrorist threat; prepare for all types of terrorist attacks; and ensure appropriate measures may be taken to reduce their vulnerability.

■ Police: Degrees

Philip Davies: [21947]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of police officers have a degree.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

The Home Office collects and publishes information on the police workforce on a biannual basis, however, information on officers' qualifications are not collected. The latest statistical releases are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>

■ Visas: Fees and Charges

Nadia Whittome: [19054]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish the (a) amount accrued to the public purse from (i) fees and (ii) charges applied by the UK Visa Application Centre; and (b) date on which each category of (A) fees and (B) charges were introduced.

Kevin Foster:

All visa and migration fees are paid directly by the applicant to the Home Office and not routed through UKVCAS. The amounts collected are published in the Home Office accounts. The amounts collected for 2018-19 are shown here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807126/6.5571_HO_Annual_Report_201920_WEB.PDF at page 137.

The fees levels approved by Parliament are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-fees-transparency-data>

However, customers using UKVCAS may elect to pay for additional premium services over and above the visa/migration fee. These premium charges are retained by the commercial operator of UKVCAS. Details of the additional, optional services can be found here at: <http://www.ukvcas.co.uk/additional-services>.

Information on the UKVCAS contract is published here:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/ec5031ea-021e-471a-86cf->

[af540e8d8efa?p=@xUIRRPT0=NjJNT08=UFQ](#). However, the commencement of service and premium charge price change dates are not disclosed separately.

■ **Visas: Football**

Gavin Newlands: [25136]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with representatives of (a) the Scottish Football Association, (b) Scottish Women's Football and (c) the Scottish Women's Premier League since 1 January 2019 on the effect of Tier 4 visa regulations on football in Scotland.

Gavin Newlands: [25137]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions officials in her Department have had with (a) the Scottish Football Association, (b) Scottish Women's Football and (c) the Scottish Women's Premier League on (i) the definition of sportsperson in the Tier 4 visa regulations and (ii) the effect of those regulations on participation in football in Scotland.

Gavin Newlands: [25138]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of amendments to Tier 4 visa regulations in respect of the definition of sportsperson on the number of (a) players and (b) clubs within the (i) Scottish Football Association, (ii) Football Association of Wales, (iii) Football Association of England and (iv) Irish Football Association.

Gavin Newlands: [25139]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with (a) the Scottish Government, (b) the Welsh Government, (c) the Northern Ireland Executive on the effect of Tier 4 visa regulations on participation rates in sport.

Gavin Newlands: [25140]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the applicability of Tier 4 visa regulations to amateur sports.

Kevin Foster:

Tier 4 visas have restrictions imposed regarding what work can be undertaken during the period leave. One of the conditions of holding a Tier 4 visa is that students must not engage in Professional sport.

The definitions of amateur and professional sports persons contained in the immigration rules were established following full consultation with all our Sports Governing Bodies, including the Scottish Football Association, the representative body for football in Scotland. The Home Office routinely engages with our Sports Governing Bodies and other governmental departments regarding the immigration requirements for professional sport.

The immigration system makes specific provision for professional sportspersons to come to the UK. These provisions seek to strike a balance between enabling UK sports teams to access top class international talent and protecting development opportunities for home grown sportspersons. The minimum standards for each sport are set by our Sports Governing Bodies, in agreement with the Home Office. It is right professional sportspersons below this standard should not be able to pursue such a career in the UK using our employment or study visa routes – including Tier 4.

Genuinely amateur players are already completely free to play sport on a purely amateur basis, whilst they are in the UK.

■ Visas: Married People

Steve Reed:

[26879]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 1248 on Visas: Married People, what her Department's definition of adequate maintenance is.

Kevin Foster:

Adequate maintenance is defined by Paragraph 6 of the Immigration Rules to mean, after income tax, National Insurance contributions and housing costs have been deducted, there must be available to the family the level of income that would be available to them if the family was in receipt of Income Support.

Published guidance on adequate maintenance for spouses is on GOV.UK here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/452967/IDI_Adequate_Maintenance_and_Accommodation_Appendix_F_M_Annex_1_7A.pdf

■ Visas: Musicians

Jo Stevens:

[26847]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she (a) has recently taken and (b) plans to take to engage the music industry on ensuring that the visa and immigration system supports the needs of that sector.

Kevin Foster:

Free Movement will end on 31 December 2020 with the end of the Transition Period. Following the end of the Transition Period EEA and Swiss nationals will be able to continue to travel to the UK for holidays or short-term trips, without needing a visa. The current Immigration Rules, including those for visitors, contain a wide range of provisions to cater for artists, entertainers and musicians.

The Home Office continues to engage with DCMS and the creative sector to ensure the future immigration system contributes to the thriving cultural sector in the UK.

More detailed analysis on the points-based system and individual routes will be published shortly.

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[26977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 19895, how many Tier 5 (Creative and Sporting) Certificates of Sponsorship were issued for musical performances in 2019.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not hold this information centrally and to obtain it would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold.

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[26978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 19895, how many musicians entered the UK under the permitted paid engagement entry route in 2019.

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[26979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2020 to Question 19895, how many musicians entered the UK to perform at permit free festivals in 2019.

Chris Philp:

Border Force does not hold the data requested in an accessible format.

When the UK's new immigration system goes live in 2021, there will continue to be special arrangements for creative workers, which will encompass both EEA and non-EEA citizens.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing

John Healey:

[\[25223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 20383 on Affordable Housing, whether the statistics on funding allocations include (a) affordable home ownership, (b) affordable rent and (c) social rented homes funded through the Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9 billion available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes in a wide range of tenures, including Social Rent. We do not break down funding by tenure for the programme however, new affordable home ownership, affordable rent and social rented homes have been funded through the Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme 2016/21.

The Affordable Homes Programme supports councils and housing associations to build more genuinely affordable homes, in areas of acute affordability pressure, with

at least 12,500 social rent homes to be delivered in high cost areas to support families struggling to pay their rent.

Further information on affordable housing supply may be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/affordable-housing-supply>

Building on this, we announced at budget 2020 that we are investing £12 billion to build affordable homes between 2021/22 - 2025/26. This will be the biggest cash investment in affordable housing for a decade.

■ Buildings: Energy

Kenny MacAskill: [25192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to introduce (a) standards and (b) regulations to replace the EU Directive on the energy performance of buildings after the transition period.

Christopher Pincher:

There are no plans at this time to repeal the legislation which transposed the requirements of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Shabana Mahmood: [26834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that leaseholders of properties clad in flammable materials are able to obtain property insurance at an affordable and proportionate cost.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 March 2020 to Question UIN25056.

■ Homelessness

Catherine West: [27041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure the Fair Funding Review takes into account the increased costs faced by councils as a result of their obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government takes funding for homelessness very seriously. The Review of Relative Needs and Resources will take into account the relative needs and resources of all local authorities, as well as the different costs of delivering services in each area. The Review will result in a more robust funding formula for local authorities for services delivered through the annual local government finance settlement, reflecting current need and using the most up-to-date available data.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Kenny MacAskill:

[25193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 20016 on Housing: Carbon Emissions, whether his Department holds information on carbon emissions target data relating to Scotland.

Christopher Pincher:

Building Regulations are a devolved matter in the United Kingdom. Details of Scotland's Building Regulations, including target carbon dioxide emissions levels, are available online at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/building-standards/>.

■ Local Government Finance

Catherine West:

[27043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether any local authority will receive a reduction in funding as a result of the Fair Funding Review.

Mr Simon Clarke:

This Government is committed to ensuring local government has the funding it needs. The sector has asked us for a simpler, up-to-date, evidence-based funding formula and that is what we are going to deliver.

No decisions have been taken on any element of the review. We aim to consult on our proposals in the Spring.

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[27018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment has he made of the potential effect of a covid-19 outbreak on the operational capacity of local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG continues to work with local agencies, including local authorities, on their preparedness to manage a Covid-19 outbreak. My officials are engaging with local authorities and the local tier to ensure they are prepared to deliver their statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This requires local authorities to develop robust emergency responses and business continuity plans for their areas. My Department is working closely with DHSC and DfE to ensure the continuity of adult and children's services.

The Secretary of State will make a statement as and when appropriate. It is important that messages from Government are measured and accurate to allow the country to prepare.

Local Government: Devolution

Catherine West: [\[27042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the White Paper on devolution will include an assessment of the potential merits of devolving greater fiscal powers to local government.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is committed to devolving power to people and places across the country. The English Devolution White Paper will set out our plans for full devolution across England, including an effective funding model for Mayoral Combined Authorities.

Multiple Occupation: Luton

Rachel Hopkins: [\[25748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the increase in multiple occupancy housing on the family housing stock in Luton.

Christopher Pincher:

It is for a local authority to consider the suitability of the composition of housing in their area. An authority may wish to consider whether to have local plan policies in place in relation to the creation of housing in multiple occupation which they can use to inform planning decisions.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Department for International Development: Bullying and Harassment**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[25177\]](#)

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

Nigel Adams:

Bullying and harassment are recorded under the same category. No cases have been recorded against Ministers or Secretaries of State in each of the last 5 years. No cases of bullying and harassment were recorded against managers in 2015 and 2016. Less than 5 cases were recorded against managers in both 2017 and 2018. 7 cases were recorded against managers in 2019. DFID has taken multiple steps to help raise awareness of bullying and harassment (including sexual), including communications from our senior leaders which encourage staff to report concerns and reaffirm their commitment to listening, taking action and tackling all concerns raised. The department has a range of options in place to facilitate reporting and support staff when they do.

■ Developing Countries: Forests

Chris Grayling:

[\[25633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 16 January 2020 to Question 1890 on Developing Countries: Environment Protection, if she will list the international forestry projects that have received grants from her Department in each year since 2016.

James Duddridge:

The international forestry projects receiving funding since 2016 are as follows:

- Nepal Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Programme
- Forest Governance, Markets and Climate (global programme with governance and timber legality focus)
- Investments in Forests and Sustainable Land Use (global programme with supply chains focus)
- International Forestry Knowledge programme (KnowFor)
- Forestry, Land-use and Governance in Indonesia
- Improving Livelihoods and Land Use in Congo Basin Forests
- Green Economic Growth for West Papua (Indonesia)
- Supporting a Sustainable Future for West Papua's Forests (Indonesia)

In addition, DFID supports forestry projects through its grant contributions to two multilateral funds, the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[26832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's press release entitled, UK will step up efforts to end preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children in the developing world by 2030, published in October 2019, whether preventable (a) HIV acquisitions and (b) AIDS related deaths will be included in those priorities.

Wendy Morton:

Ending new HIV infections and preventing AIDS-related deaths is a critical part of the UK government's renewed focus on ending preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns, and children by 2030.

The UK is a world leader in efforts to end the AIDS epidemic. Last year the UK made a £1.4 billion pledge to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria for the 6th replenishment covering 2020 to 2022. This supports the commitment to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. In 2018 alone, the Global Fund provided 18.9 million people with treatment in 2018 and protected nearly 700,000 babies from being infected by their mothers.

We are working to expand access to treatment, while reducing new infections, particularly among adolescent girls, women, and other marginalised populations, who face stigma and discrimination.

■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[25637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department categorises all deaths following HIV infection as preventable; and how those deaths are recognised in her Department's policies on ending preventable deaths.

Wendy Morton:

Ending new HIV infections and preventing AIDS-related deaths is a critical part of the UK government's renewed focus on ending preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns, and children by 2030.

The UK is a world leader in efforts to end the AIDS epidemic. Last year the UK made a £1.4 billion pledge to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria for the 6th replenishment covering 2020 to 2022. This supports the commitment to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. In 2018 alone, the Global Fund provided 18.9 million people with treatment in 2018 and protected nearly 700,000 babies from being infected by their mothers.

We are working to expand access to treatment, while reducing new infections, particularly among adolescent girls, women, and other marginalised populations, who face stigma and discrimination.

■ Refugees: Education

Gareth Thomas:

[\[26126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to improve access to education for refugees in other countries; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

DFID is a world leader in global education and the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 4. In particular, the UK prioritises education in conflict and crises for the world's most vulnerable children, supporting quality education as well as the protection of children.

We are the largest donor to Education Cannot Wait, the global fund for education in emergencies, which the UK helped found. Our unprecedented £85 million contribution announced by the Prime Minister last year will support 600,000 children living in conflict areas and areas of protracted crises. We also run major country-level programmes supporting refugee education in countries including Bangladesh, Uganda, Lebanon, and Jordan.

■ Renewable Energy: Overseas Aid

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[24387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she has taken to ensure official development assistance supports renewable energy projects.

James Duddridge:

The UK is committed to unlocking affordable and clean energy and contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7. UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) increasingly supports renewable energy projects – between 2011-12 and 2018-19 UK aid has provided 26 million people with improved access to clean energy and installed 1,600 MW of clean energy capacity, avoiding 16 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

DFID supports a number of ongoing programmes with a clean energy focus, such as the Africa Clean Energy programme, which works in over 15 African countries to increase deployment of off-grid renewable energy, by supporting businesses and governments to improve market conditions for the private sector.

The doubling of the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) contribution to £11.6 billion from 2021/22 to 2025/26 will enable the UK to do even more to accelerate the development and adoption of low carbon technologies.

The ICF increase includes up to £1 billion for the Ayrton Fund, which will focus on developing and testing new technology in areas such as energy storage, new cooling technologies, next generation solar, and technologies for industrial decarbonisation.

As announced by the Prime Minister at the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January, the UK will no longer provide any new direct ODA, investment, export credit or trade promotion support for thermal coal mining or coal power plants overseas.

■ UNAIDS: Liability

Gareth Thomas:

[\[25617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department plans to take as a result of the ruling by the International Labour Organisation that UNAids had failed in its duty of care towards a former staff member; and if she will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

In 2019 following a review by the Independent Expert Panel, the governing body of UNAIDS, of which the UK is a member, approved a Management Action Plan (MAP) to tackle harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and abuse of power in UNAIDS. Full implementation of the MAP is a condition of DFID's Performance Agreement with UNAIDS. 50% of DFID's annual funding to UNAIDS depends on successful implementation of the Performance Agreement. The UK remains committed to driving up safeguarding standards across the aid sector. We have been clear that organisations have a duty of care to staff and must always protect people.

The UK has a zero tolerance approach to harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and abuse of power in any organisation.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Imports: Israeli Settlements

Christian Matheson: [\[26894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy to exclude the import of goods produced in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories from future trade deals; and if she will make a statement.

Conor Burns:

The settlements are not covered by the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which currently governs our trade with Israel, nor by the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, which will enter into force at the end of the Transition Period. We are committed to maintaining this position.

■ Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements

Christian Matheson: [\[26893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that UK businesses do not conduct business in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Conor Burns:

The UK routinely updates our guidance to British businesses on the Overseas Business Risk website. This is voluntary guidance to British businesses. Ultimately it will be the decision of an individual or company whether to operate in occupied territories.

■ Trade Agreements: Rwanda

Andrew Rosindell: [\[27523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her Rwandan counterpart on a bilateral trade deal.

Conor Burns:

The Taxation (Cross-Border Trade) Act enables the UK to put in place a UK trade preferences scheme for developing countries. This will grant duty-free quota-free access to UK markets for Least Developed Countries, including Rwanda.

The UK looks forward to discussing the possibility of a trade agreement in East Africa with Rwandan partners in the near future.

JUSTICE■ **Judicial Review****Caroline Lucas:**[\[25645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the oral contribution of the Attorney General of 16 January 2020, Official Report, columns 1143-1144, what plans he has for a review into the judicial review process; who will lead that review; what his timetable is for that review; whether that review will be conducted as part of the Constitution, Democracy and Human Rights Commission; and how he plans to consult (a) Members and (b) the public.

Chris Philp:

As set out in our manifesto, the Government will ensure that judicial review is available to protect the rights of the individuals against an overbearing state, while ensuring that it is not abused to conduct politics by another means or to create needless delays.

Discussions on how to meet this commitment are continuing within Government and further details will be announced in due course.

■ **Marriage: Humanism****Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[25124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of granting legal recognition to humanist marriages in advance of the report from the Law Commission.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[25125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of public support for legal recognition of humanist marriages in England and Wales.

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[25126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of choices available to non-religious couples to have a legally-recognised wedding conducted in line with their own beliefs.

Alex Chalk:

Government consulted in 2014 on marriages by non-religious belief organisations. Assessment of these matters can be found in the Government response at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/marriages-by-non-religious-belief-organisations>.

■ **Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974: Prosecutions****Luke Pollard:**[\[25734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases have been prosecuted under the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974.

Luke Pollard:

[\[25735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases have been prosecuted under the Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals Order 2011.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published data up to December 2018. The number of prosecutions for offences under the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and Other Mammals) Order 1974 for 2014 to 2018 can be found in the accompanying table for the last five years for which data have been published.

Data for offences under the Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals Order 2011 are not held centrally by the Ministry of Justice. This information may be held by the individual courts in England and Wales and as such it can only be obtained at disproportionate cost

Data for the year ending December 2019 will be published in May 2020.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 25734 table.xlsx]

■ **Television: Licensing**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[26808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) people and (b) women have been imprisoned by Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales for the non-payment of TV licence evasion fines in each year since 1995.

Chris Philp:

The number of people admitted to prison for failing to pay fines in respect of the non-payment of a TV licence in England and Wales in each year since 1995 can be viewed in the attached table.

A person cannot receive a custodial sentence for TV licence evasion but can be committed to prison for wilfully refusing to pay the fine. Imprisonment is only pursued as a matter of last resort.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 26808_final response table.xlsx]

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Northern Ireland Government: Elections**

Stephen Farry:

[\[27649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on what date the next election to the Northern Ireland Assembly is planned to be held.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that the next scheduled Northern Ireland Assembly election is due to take place on 5 May 2022.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Public Consultation****Kevin Brennan:**[\[26817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Government plans to publish its final response to the Aviation 2050: the future of UK aviation consultation.

Kelly Tolhurst:

It is important that we consider the Climate Change Committee's recommendations on aviation and net zero before we publish our Aviation 2050 strategy. Amending the timetable to publishing this year means we are able to ensure our position on climate change is up to date and takes into account recent developments.

We plan to publish a consultation on aviation and climate change shortly.

■ Diamond Princess: Coronavirus**Karl Turner:**[\[25090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support has been provided by UK Ship Register officials to (a) crew and (b) passengers on the cruise liner Diamond Princess after the outbreak of covid-19 on that ship.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Diamond Princess is registered with the United Kingdom. As Flag State, our obligations under the international Maritime Labour Convention include safeguarding the welfare and well-being of all the crew, not just those who were UK nationals, and that they could all access, amongst other things, medical support, as and when they needed it.

During the quarantine period of the Diamond Princess the UK government acted on behalf of the safety and well-being of a) the crew and b) the passengers. UK officials in my Department and at the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, as well as valuable consular support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Tokyo, worked closely with the ship-owner, Carnival Cruises, the Japanese Government and their health authorities in Yokohama to ensure the well-being and safety of all persons on board and limit the risk of contagion spreading.

■ Flybe: Expenditure**Gavin Robinson:**[\[26865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any funding from the public purse was formally committed to Flybe prior to its administration.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We explored a range of funding options with the company but the directors decided it was not viable to keep Flybe operating. Following a commercial decision by the company Flybe ceased trading. Not a single penny of taxpayer's money has been given to Flybe.

Gavin Robinson:[\[26866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether any funding from the public purse was allocated to Flybe prior to its administration.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We explored a range of funding options with the company but the directors decided it was not viable to keep Flybe operating. Following a commercial decision by the company Flybe ceased trading. Not a single penny of taxpayer's money has been given to Flybe.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Chilterns**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[26793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what investigations into extending the HS2 Chiltern Tunnels are ongoing; and when a final decision will be made on any such extension.

Andrew Stephenson:

The House of Commons Select Committee considered the possibility of a bored tunnel passing through the whole of the Chilterns AONB, continuing north of Wendover, in great detail. The proposal was rejected, primarily on the grounds of cost.

The Committee did however recommend a 2.6km extension of the bored tunnel (originally to be 13.4 km long) to South Heath, which was a significant change made by AP4, introduced on 12 October 2015.

Since Royal Assent for the Phase One Act in February 2017, HS2 Ltd have been proceeding on the basis of the tunnel design as set out in the Act. There are no investigations into extending the tunnel and no plans to do so.

■ Motorway Service Areas: Location**Saqib Bhatti:**[\[27008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the risks of locating motorway service stations (a) on smart motorways and (b) between junctions that are normally congested on motorways.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the important role that motorway service areas (MSAs) play in providing a safe place for motorists to stop and take a short break from driving. It is for the private sector to promote and operate service areas that meet the needs of the travelling public. New and existing roadside facilities are subject to the

provisions of relevant planning legislation and regulation, which together set the framework within which local planning authorities would consider the planning proposals for such developments. As a statutory consultee, Highways England will provide advice to local planning authorities on matters relating to the impact that such proposed developments will have upon the safety and operation of the strategic road network as set out in the Department for Transport Circular 02/2013. In 2019, the Department commissioned an evidence stocktake to gather the facts on the safety of smart motorways and make recommendations. The stocktake has just concluded.

■ Railways: Disability

Mark Eastwood:

[\[901511\]](#)

What steps he is taking to improve the accessibility of railway stations for disabled people.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As I mentioned to my hon. friend in the chamber this morning, the Government has recently made £350 million available to add another 209 stations to the Access for All programme. The stations he mentioned (Dewsbury, Shepley and Mirfield) were not successful in that round of money, but I would be delighted to meet and work with him to ensure that those stations get the funding they deserve, because our rail network needs to be accessible for everybody. Furthermore, Dewsbury and Mirfield stations are part of the TransPennine Route Upgrade programme which includes options to improve accessibility.

■ Railways: Standards

Stephen Hammond:

[\[25638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many rail delays were caused by (a) track failure, (b) signalling failure, (c) other infrastructure failure, (d) staff shortages, (e) train failures and (f) other train operating company failures in each year since 2015.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The number of delay minutes affecting passenger operators since 2015 is as shown in the attached document. Delay minutes are the total number of minutes caused by a failure; this includes both the primary cause of delay and any knock on delays as a result of this failure. This data is not available broken down by the categories requested.

Attachments:

1. Number of delay in minutes since 2015 [Number of delay in minutes since 2015.docx]

■ Red Diesel: Excise Duties

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[901513\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on plans to increase fuel duty on red diesel.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has regular discussions with the Treasury on tax matters. In yesterday's Budget, the Government set out its position on red diesel, including importantly the use of red diesels for rail. We will continue to work closely with the Treasury and transport stakeholders during the upcoming consultation on red diesel to take into account any issues raised.

■ **Shipping: Discrimination****Cat Smith:**[\[901512\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help protect seafarers from nationality-based pay discrimination.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Equality Act 2010 (Work on Ships and Hovercraft) Regulations 2011 provides protection for EEA seafarers and those from designated States. These Regulations will be reviewed later this year.

■ **South Western Railway: Strikes****Munira Wilson:**[\[27044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that South Western Railway passengers who pay using daily tickets, Oyster or contactless pay-as-you go are aware of their entitlement to compensation arising from service cancellations as a result of the strike action of December 2019.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Officials will be working with South Western Railway (SWR) to ensure that they maximise awareness of the right to compensation for passengers who travelled during this time and meet the criteria for the additional compensation.

SWR presently have initial information on their website about the level of compensation to be offered and further information will follow as soon as possible.

Details can be found here <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/december-2019-strike-compensation>

■ **Transport: North of England****Scott Benton:**[\[25199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives from Transport for the North on the (a) integration and (b) economic benefit of transport infrastructure programmes in the North.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Ministers meet regularly with Transport for the North to discuss delivery of the Government's infrastructure programme. The Government is committed to increasing infrastructure investment that will support levelling up and drive growth and productivity across our Northern communities.

TREASURY**■ Asylum: Children****Mr Barry Sheerman:****[26810]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allocate additional funding to the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government to support the continuation of the Controlling Migration Fund and local authority support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

John Glen:

The Controlling Migration Fund opened in November 2016 with the aim of easing pressures on local services linked to recent migration and providing targeted immigration enforcement activity. Until 2020 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has contributed £100 million of funding, with the Home Office contributing £40 million worth of enforcement activity.

The Home Office also provides funding to local authorities as a contribution to the costs they incur when supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), which is in addition to the money provided through the local government finance settlement. In May 2019, the Home Office announced a significant increase in the funding: from 1 April 2019, local authorities now receive £114 per UASC per night for each UASC in their care, regardless of their age or when they entered the UK. This represented a 61% increase to the lowest rate that was previously paid.

Future spending decisions on the Controlling Migration Fund and funding for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children will be taken at the Comprehensive Spending Review this year.

■ Cash Dispensing**Paul Maynard:****[25058]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on the availability of cash.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that widespread free access to cash is extremely important to the day-to-day lives of many consumers and businesses. Our policy is to support digital payments while safeguarding access to cash for those who need it.

The finance industry has a key role to play in protecting access to cash. Several industry initiatives, such as LINK's 'request an ATM' scheme or UK Finance's Community Access to Cash Initiative, are welcome and are helping to support cash in the short-term.

The Government recognises that action needs to be taken to protect access to cash for consumers and businesses in the long-term. That is why, at the March 2020 Budget, the Chancellor announced that the Government will bring forward legislation to protect the sustainability of the UK's cash infrastructure. This will ensure that

millions of people, including vulnerable groups, can get hold of the cash they need when they need it.

The Government will engage with regulators and industry on the design of legislation, ensuring that the approach reflects the needs of cash users across the economy.

■ Cooperatives: Yorkshire and the Humber

Alex Sobel: [\[26177\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to encourage the development of co-operative businesses in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Alex Sobel: [\[26178\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many co-operative businesses were started in Yorkshire and the Humber in each year since 2010.

John Glen:

The Government supports mutuals and co-operatives right across the country, which provide diversity in all sectors of the economy. In 2014 the Government passed the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act, to reduce legal complexity for co-operatives and community benefit societies, and increased the amount of share capital an individual member can put into a co-operative society to £100,000.

HM Treasury officials also hosted a 'Mutuals Workshop' with representatives from the sector in 2019, to understand the challenges faced by mutuals and how Government can help to address these.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the registering authority for co-operative and community benefit societies under the 2014 Act. The FCA does not classify registrations by region. However, since 2010 over 1350 societies have been registered across the UK.

■ Corporation Tax: Digital Technology

Anneliese Dodds: [\[27067\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on UK tax revenues of the changes proposed in the OECD's Two-pillar approach to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy.

Jesse Norman:

Securing a global solution to the tax challenges posed by digitalisation remains a priority for the Government.

The Government continues to play an active role in shaping the proposals under consideration within the OECD, with a view to delivering an enduring multilateral solution that works in the UK's long-term fiscal and economic interests.

■ Electronic Government

Scott Mann:

[25708]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to introduce an online chat function to the government gateway system.

Jesse Norman:

Following the introduction of a new Digital Engagement Platform in January 2020, HMRC will be introducing a range of new interactive digital interventions across all of their digital services over the next two years. HMRC's aim is to encourage taxpayers to make full use of those digital services, and this will in turn drive the choices that HMRC make on which digital interventions to deploy and where.

■ Entrepreneurs' Relief

Wes Streeting:

[26898]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people claimed Entrepreneurs' Relief in each year since 2015, by constituency.

Jesse Norman:

The number of taxpayers claiming Entrepreneurs' Relief in each constituency is given in the attached table by tax year from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Statistics on Capital Gains Tax for 2018-19 are currently due for publication in August 2020. Values under 30 have been suppressed due to statistical disclosure control.

Attachments:

1. Table attachment [Number of Individuals Claiming Entrepreneurs Relief by Tax Year and Cons...xlsx]

■ European Investment Bank

Munira Wilson:

[27045]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the level of borrowing was that the UK undertook from the European Investment Bank in (a) 2016, (b) 2017, (c) 2018 and (d) 2019.

Jesse Norman:

The European Investment Bank publishes details of all projects on their website, which can be filtered by country and year. Details can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.eib.org/projects/loan/list/?region=1&country=GB>.

Munira Wilson:

[27047]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the level of borrowing that the UK will be able to undertake from the European Investment Bank after the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

The UK is no longer a member of the European Investment Bank (EIB) as membership is only available to EU member states. This means that the UK is not

eligible for new financial operations from the EIB that are reserved for Member States. The UK is exploring options for a future relationship with the EIB as a third country.

The Government is committed to ensuring that businesses and infrastructure projects continue to have access to the finance they need. The UK has a range of existing tools to support investment, including the UK Guarantees Scheme. In March 2019, the Government also launched the Infrastructure Finance Review, to examine how it can best support infrastructure investment in the future.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[26833\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government on the financial implications of the Grenfell Tower fire for leaseholders with properties clad in flammable materials.

John Glen:

One of the Government's most important duties is to ensure that residents – including leaseholders – feel safe and secure in their homes. That is why the Budget announced £1bn of additional funding to remove unsafe non-ACM cladding from private and social sector residential buildings above 18 metres. The Government expects building owners who have already committed to fund remedial works without passing on the costs to leaseholders to stick to these commitments.

■ Loans: Unfair Practices

Rehman Chishti:

[\[26953\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to eliminate unfair practices by logbook loan companies.

John Glen:

In 2014, HM Treasury asked the Law Commission to review the legislation underpinning logbook loans. During consultation stakeholders raised concerns that any reform could increase consumer detriment, particularly amongst vulnerable consumers. Furthermore, the number of logbook loans also fell substantially from 52,000 loans registered in 2014 to 10,194 in June 2019. For these reasons, the government decided not to take forward reform of this legislation.

In 2014, the government also transferred regulatory responsibility for the consumer credit market to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Logbook lending is part of the FCA's new supervisory strategy for high-cost credit lenders, which will run until 2021.

Treasury ministers and officials meet regularly with the FCA and continue to work closely to ensure consumers of financial services are treated fairly.

■ Revenue and Customs: Proof of Identity

Carol Monaghan:

[26930]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including the Post Office Document Certification service in the list of approved document certifiers for HMRC services.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC currently have no plans to ask the Post Office to provide document verification services.

■ Self-employed: Tax Avoidance

Neil Coyle:

[25119]

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) preparedness of businesses for the reforms to off-payroll working rules due to be implemented in April 2020 and (b) the potential merits of delaying that implementation date.

Neil Coyle:

[25122]

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on labour market flexibility of the proposed reforms to off-payroll working rules.

Jesse Norman:

As announced at Budget 2018, the reform of the off-payroll working rules will come into effect from 6 April 2020. 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>.

As part of the review published on 27 February 2020, HMRC engaged with a number of affected individuals and businesses through a series of stakeholder roundtables to test business readiness.

The Government is committed to working with organisations to ensure changes to the off-payroll working rules are implemented correctly from April 2020. HMRC are undertaking an extensive programme of education and support to help organisations prepare for the reform. This includes:

- Offering one-to-one support to more than 2,000 of the UK's biggest employers, and writing directly to 43,000 medium sized businesses and other organisations.
- Providing large and medium sized businesses, public bodies, and charities with factsheets to share with their contractors, and publishing this factsheet on gov.uk.
- Holding workshops with small tax agents, recruitment agencies, charities, and public bodies.

- Holding at least weekly webinars, with small tax agents, recruitment agencies, charities, public bodies and contractors.
- Publishing an enhanced version of the Check Employment Status for Tax online tool in November 2019 to help individuals and organisations make the right status determinations and apply the off-payroll rules correctly.

Neil Coyle:

[25120]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing regulations to prevent companies who employ temporary agency contractors operating disguised remuneration schemes before the reforms to off-payroll working rules are made in April 2020.

Jesse Norman:

It is possible to comply with the off-payroll working rules without using disguised remuneration schemes. The Government remains committed to tackling the continued use of disguised remuneration schemes, and set out further action to tackle these schemes at the Budget. HMRC have already published a factsheet to support contractors to prepare for the changes to the off-payroll working rules, and are continuing to step up their communications in the run up to implementation. HMRC have also launched further products to support contractors in understanding the changes, including a self-help guide on how to spot tax avoidance schemes.

Neil Coyle:

[25121]

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on employment rights of the proposed reforms to off-payroll working rules.

Jesse Norman:

It is fair that two people working as employees pay broadly the same tax and NICs, even if one of them works through their own company and the other is directly employed. There is no direct link between employment status for rights and employment status for tax; however, those who wish to challenge their employment status for rights can take their case to an employment tribunal, regardless of their tax status.

Neil Coyle:

[25123]

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to improve the usability of the Check Employment Status Tool ahead of the introduction of reforms to the off-payroll working rules.

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 their 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.

Sir Graham Brady:

[25625]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the off-shoring of contracts as a consequence of the planned extension of IR35.

Jesse Norman:

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.

Martyn Day:

[25703]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to delay enforcement of the IR35 rules until the House of Lords Economic Affairs Finance Bill Sub-Committee reports on its inquiry.

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.

In response to the off-payroll working review, published on 27 February, HMRC have published a statement of intent setting out HMRC's compliance approach in the first year of implementation. As part of HMRC's supportive approach, in the first 12 months taxpayers will not have to pay penalties for inaccuracies relating to the off-payroll working rules unless there is evidence of deliberate non-compliance.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[26804\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has of the additional revenue that will accrue to the public purse as a result of his proposed IR35 changes; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC's latest assessment of the additional revenue as a result of the changes to the off-payroll working rules is set out in Table 2.2 of Budget 2020.

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

WALES

■ UK Trade with EU: Wales

Ruth Jones:

[\[27033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Welsh business community on future trading arrangements with the EU.

Simon Hart:

I have frequent discussions with a wide range of representatives of the Welsh business community including representatives from the agriculture, automotive, and broader business sectors. As part of these discussions, I regularly discuss the Government's ambitions for future trading arrangements with the EU and the opportunities offered by trade deals with the US, Japan and other priority partners.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission

Seema Malhotra:

[\[26877\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what additional resources her Department plans to make available to the Equality and Human Rights Commission to help it perform its role as regulator for the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018; and if she will make a statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

As an independent public body, decisions on the allocation of resources within the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)'s overall budget are matters for the Commission. In the current financial year, the EHRC has an allocated budget of £17.7m and has revised its allocated funding for enforcement of these regulations using existing funds.

The Government Equalities Office monitors the volume of complaints about accessible websites made in the first instance to the Equality Advisory Support

Service (EASS), and is satisfied that this remains well within the current budgets of both the EASS and the EHRC. This position will be kept under review.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Child Maintenance Service: Standards

Caroline Nokes:

[26915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to make an assessment of the operating efficiency of the Child Maintenance Service.

Mims Davies:

When measuring the efficiency of the Child Maintenance Service, we collect data on rate of compliance. These figures are published quarterly in table 9 of the Child Maintenance Service experimental statistics data tables, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-september-2019-experimental>

■ Employment and Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Seema Malhotra:

[26954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential effect of covid-19 on (a) employment levels and (b) the number of people claiming universal credit.

Mims Davies:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions met with the Chief Medical Officer recently to discuss issues surrounding the potential effect of COVID-19. Government officials are working closely together to understand its potential impacts on employment and benefits, including Universal Credit.

■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

Neil Coyle:

[26911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much money from the public purse was spent on legal fees for cases relating to the classification of panic rooms as spare rooms for the purposes of the spare room subsidy in each of the last five years.

Will Quince:

Case "A" a property adapted under the sanctuary scheme, including the installation of a panic room, was heard from the Court of Appeal upwards alongside a number of other cases challenging the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (RSRS) policy. Therefore, we are unable to apportion the specific costs in relation to case A.

In the majority of the cases it was found that the removal of the RSRS policy was lawful and that Discretionary Housing Payments(DHPs) were an appropriate mitigation.

Since 2011 the Government has provided over £1bn in DHPs to local authorities (LAs) to help support vulnerable people affected by different welfare reforms including the RSRS. Additionally, we announced a further £40m for DHPs in 2020/21.

Neil Coyle: [\[26912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an estimate of the number of benefits claimants that will be affected by the European Court of Human Rights judgement of 24 October 2019 on the classification of panic rooms for the purposes of the spare room subsidy.

Neil Coyle: [\[26913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an estimate of the annual cost to the public purse of amending benefit claimants' payments in line with the European Court of Human Rights judgement of 24 October 2019 on the classification of panic rooms for the purposes of the spare room subsidy.

Will Quince:

We are carefully considering the court's decision.

■ Independent Serious Case Panel

Stephen Timms: [\[26799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Independent Serious Case panel; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

The panel was developed to take themes and systemic issues that come out of various case reviews and make recommendations for improvements. The Department understands the importance of the work of the Serious Case Panel and is committed to getting this right. We need to do so carefully and therefore we are iterating where necessary to ensure it is effective. The Secretary of State will update the House in due course.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Stephen Timms: [\[26801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 5 March 2020 to Question 23566 on Local Housing Allowance, if she will publish her Department's equality impact assessment on its decision to uplift local housing allowance by 1.7 per cent.

Will Quince:

The Department completed an equality analysis on its decision to uplift local housing allowance by 1.7 per cent which will be published on gov.uk in due course.

■ Long Term Unemployed People

Antony Higginbotham: [\[25745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help the long-term unemployed find work.

Antony Higginbotham: [\[26993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has in place to help the long-term unemployed back into the workplace.

Mims Davies:

This Government is committed to providing targeted support for people, regardless of the length of time they have been unemployed, so that everyone, no matter what their start in life, is given the very best chance of getting into work.

In both Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit, the Work and Health Programme uses the expertise of private, public and voluntary and community sector providers to deliver sustained employment for disabled people, certain priority groups and the long term unemployed (more than 2 years).

For claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance, Additional Employability Support provides additional time for claimants who are long term unemployed – 18 months or longer – with their Work Coach to tackle barriers to work: it also includes targeted group sessions; case conferencing with a work psychologist; mock interviews and job application support; and a rigorous skills assessment.

■ Motability

Jo Stevens: [\[26919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of the Motability Scheme have had their eligibility reassessed and their (a) mobility scooters and (b) cars removed in the last six months.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department does not hold information on how many people have Motability vehicles. Therefore, we are unable to provide accurate information on the number of people who have been required to return a Motability vehicle in the last six months.

Motability is an independent organisation wholly responsible for the administration of the Motability Scheme. The details of the number of people returning Motability vehicles for the requested time period would only be contained within Motability's Management Information.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[26811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independent payment claimants have had their assessment scores changed following an appeal to the Tribunal, but before their tribunal hearing date, in each of the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

The assessment scores for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants at the Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) and appeal stages are not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations**Ronnie Cowan:****[26929]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure the effectiveness of the initial personal independence payment assessment in order to mitigate the recourse to appeal.

Justin Tomlinson:

We monitor all elements of PIP Providers' performance, including quality of assessments. There is an independent audit function that continually monitors the quality of assessment reports and provides feedback to Providers. Providers are held accountable against a number of performance measures. If the Providers do not meet the agreed standards, financial remedies can apply.

Turning to the decision making process itself, last year we implemented a new approach to handling applications for Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) in PIP which includes contacting claimants, where appropriate, to see if there is information that would enable us to change the decision. To support this, we are investing additional time for communication, evidence gather and review. This approach supports our aim - to make the right decision as early as possible - so claimants don't need to progress to the appeal stage. Early results have been positive and the same approach has now been adopted in ESA and UC. We continue to engage with stakeholders to explore how we can further improve the effectiveness of the MR process.

■ Personal Independence Payment: North West**Ms Angela Eagle:****[26812]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the current estimated processing time is for mandatory reconsiderations of personal independence payment claims in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statistics on the average clearance time for Mandatory Reconsiderations (MR) for Personal Independence Payment can be found in the data tables of the quarterly statistical publication 'Personal Independence Payment: April 2013 to October 2019' published by the Department for Work and Pensions and available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-april-2013-to-october-2019>

Figures for the North West region and the five local authorities which comprise Merseyside can be found in Table 4B (ii), 'MR Clearance Time (median calendar days), Normal Rules, by year of clearance, region and Local Authority'.

Figures for Wallasey can be found in Table 4B (i), 'MR Clearance Time (median calendar days), Normal Rules, by year of clearance, and Parliamentary Constituency'.

■ Social Security Benefits

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[26813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that people whose appointments with her Department are cancelled do not have their benefits suspended for non-attendance of those meetings.

Mims Davies:

A claim to benefit should not be suspended due to an appointment being cancelled by the Department. If there is no alternative but to cancel a scheduled appointment at the Jobcentre, claimants will be contacted to apologise for the cancellation, explain the reasons for cancellation and seek to agree a new date and new time for a new appointment.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[26815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it will be her Department's policy that the integrated assessment system for personal independence payment and work capability assessments will adopt a unified policy for recording assessments.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Rt.Hon Member to the answer I gave on 10 February 2020 to Question [UIN 12293](#).

I also refer the Rt.Hon Member to a further answer I gave on 09 March 2020 to question [UIN 25186](#).

■ Social Security Benefits: North West

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[26814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people invited to appointments with her Department were recorded as non-attending in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) the Wirral and (d) Wallasey in each of the last 12 months for which information is available.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Universal Credit**Ronnie Cowan:**[\[26928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to make an announcement on the appropriate delivery mechanism for the universal credit transition fund.

Will Quince:

From April 2020, a new £10 million transitional fund will be available to partner organisations to provide extra help to the most vulnerable, improving access to welfare and labour market opportunities.

Further information on the fund and how organisations can bid to access it will be available shortly.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

TRANSPORT

■ Highways England: Pay

John Spellar:

[\[12867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff at Highways England received a salary of more than £100,000 in the last financial year.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 14 February 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Grant Shapps:

Highways England employed 61 staff on a base salary of £100,000 or more in **2018-19** ~~2019-20~~. I have committed in the House to addressing this issue.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's report on the Internet

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS156\]](#)

Today the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published its latest report, which can be found at www.iicsa.org.uk.

This report relates to its investigation into the role of the internet in facilitating child sexual abuse. I am thankful for the strength and courage of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences to ensure the Inquiry can deliver its vital work.

Government will review this report and consider how to respond to its content in due course.

I would like to thank Professor Jay and her Panel for their continued work to uncover the truth, expose what went wrong in the past and to learn the lessons for the future.

TRANSPORT

■ Strategic Road Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps): [\[HCWS155\]](#)

Following concerns about Smart Motorway safety, I asked my Department to review the evidence and, if needed, bring forward recommendations. Today I am publishing that work and taking the action necessary to ensure our roads are as safe as they can be.

Overall, what the evidence shows is that in most ways, smart motorways are as safe as, or safer than, the conventional ones. But not in every way. To ensure we are doing all we can do to improve safety, I am publishing a package of 18 measures. This will allow us to retain the benefits of smart motorways while addressing the concerns that have been identified.

Smart Motorways have helped us cope with a 23 per cent rise in traffic since 2000. They save motorists thousands of hours sitting in jams. They reduce the disruption and environmental destruction which would otherwise be needed to widen our busiest roads. Their growth, however, has not always been well explained, there is not uniformity, and concerns exist over safety.

As part of our work we listened to the families who've campaigned on this issue, and I want to pay tribute them. I'm also grateful to Colleagues and groups like the AA and RAC who have pursued this issue and helped us reach this outcome.

Alongside the report, and annexed to it, which will be published on gov.uk, therefore, I am launching an extended package of measures - an Action Plan - to raise the bar on smart motorway safety. It will include:

- abolishing the confusing "dynamic hard shoulder" smart motorways, where the hard shoulder operates only part-time and is a live running lane the rest of the time;
- substantially speeding up the deployment of "stopped vehicle detection" technology across the entire "all lane running" smart motorway network, so stopped vehicles can be detected and the lanes closed more quickly. Highways England is to accelerate its plans and install the technology within the next 36 months, setting a clear public timetable for the first time;
- faster attendance by more Highways England traffic officer patrols on smart motorways where the existing spacing between places to stop in an emergency is more than one mile, with the aim of reducing the attendance time from an average of 17 minutes to 10 minutes;
- reducing the distance between places to stop in an emergency to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile where feasible so that on future schemes motorists should typically reach one every 45 seconds at 60mph. The maximum spacing will be 1 mile;
- installing ten additional emergency areas on the existing M25 smart motorways on the section of smart motorway with a higher rate of live lane stops and where places to stop in an emergency are furthest apart;
- considering a national programme to install more emergency areas where places to stop in an emergency are more than one mile apart ;
- investigating M6 Bromford viaduct and the M1 at Luton, Sheffield and Wakefield where there is evidence of clusters of incidents . Where an intervention is considered likely to make a difference, we will look to make changes at these locations;
- making emergency areas more visible – all emergency areas will have a bright orange road surface, dotted lines on the surfacing showing where to stop, better and more frequent signs on approach and signs inside giving information on what to do in an emergency. These will be installed by the end of spring 2020;
- more traffic signs giving the distance to the next place to stop in an emergency, so you will almost always be able to see a sign. Typically, these will be between approximately 330 and 440 yards apart;
- more communication with drivers. We recognise that we could do more therefore we are committing to an additional £5m on national targeted communications campaigns to further increase awareness and understanding of smart motorways, how they work and how to use them confidently.
- displaying 'report of obstruction' messages automatically on electronic signs, triggered by the stopped vehicle detection system, to warn drivers of a stopped vehicle ahead, this is currently being trialled on the M25 and then a further trial on the M3;
- places to stop in an emergency shown on your satnav by working with satnav providers to ensure the locations are shown on the screen, when needed;

- making it easier to call for help if broken down by working with car manufacturers to improve awareness of the use of the eCall 'SOS' button in newer cars to call for help;
- we have changed the law to enable automatic detection of 'red X' violations and enforcement using cameras and we will be expanding the upgrade of smart motorway cameras (HADECS) to identify more of those who currently ignore the 'red X'. The penalty is 3 points on the driver's licence and a £100 fine, or the driver can be referred to an awareness course;
- an update of the Highway Code to provide more guidance;
- closer working with the recovery industry on training and procedures;
- reviewing existing emergency areas where the width is less than the current 15-foot-wide standard. If feasible and appropriate we will widen to this standard; and
- a review of the use of red flashing lights to commence immediately. We have listened to the calls for recovery vehicles to be allowed to use red flashing lights. We will commence work immediately on a review.

My point on communication with drivers is important. Motorists could be better informed about this change in our motorways. Many do not know exactly what a smart motorway is, and are not aware of when they are on one or not. We need to tackle the public perception of, and public confidence in, the safety of smart motorways as much as the reality.

By these measures we ensure safety is at the heart of our smart motorway programme and assure public confidence in the motorway network. We will continue to monitor the data and work with campaigners to ensure that improvements are delivered.

A copy of the report has been placed in the Library of the House.