



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:33 P.M., 13 March 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY</b>	<b>5</b>	■ Rugby: Listed Events	11
■ Biofuels	5	■ Rugby: Wales	12
■ Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund: Wales	5	■ Television: Licensing	12
■ Post Offices: ICT	6	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>13</b>
■ Public Holidays: VE Day	6	■ Disability and Special Educational Needs: Children	13
■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus	6	■ Disability and Special Educational Needs: Schools	15
<b>CABINET OFFICE</b>	<b>7</b>	■ Education: Refugees	16
■ Civil Servants: Recruitment	7	■ Music: Education	16
■ Constituencies	8	■ Offences against Children	17
■ DXC Technology	8	■ Schools: Coronavirus	18
■ Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Public Appointments	8	■ Schools: Mental Health Services	18
■ Homelessness: Death	9	■ Sex and Relationship Education	19
■ List of Ministerial Responsibilities	9	■ Social Services: Children	21
■ Ministerial Policy Advisers	10	■ T-levels	21
■ Prime Minister: Staff	10	■ Universities: Coronavirus	22
<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>11</b>	■ Violence: Advisory Services	22
■ Armed Forces: Housing	11	<b>ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS</b>	<b>23</b>
■ Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review	11	■ Agriculture: Biodiversity	23
		■ Air Pollution and Volatile Organic Compounds	24

■ Air Pollution: Standards	24	■ Clinical Commissioning	
■ Badgers: Hedgehogs	25	■ Groups: Finance	38
■ Bridleways	25	■ Coronavirus: Health Education	39
■ Countryside Stewardship Scheme and Nature Reserves: Expenditure	25	■ Coronavirus: Medical Equipment	39
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff	27	■ Coronavirus: Pharmacy	40
■ Fishing Catches	28	■ Coronavirus: Social Services	40
■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software	28	■ Dental Services: West Midlands	41
■ Litter: Yorkshire and the Humber	29	■ Diabetes: Medical Equipment	41
■ Nature Reserves	29	■ Gender Recognition: Clinics	42
■ Seabed: Bomb Disposal	29	■ General Practitioners	42
■ Tourism: Elephants	30	■ General Practitioners: Training	43
■ Tree Planting: Urban Areas	31	■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements	43
■ Trees	31	■ Hospital Beds	44
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	32	■ Hospital Beds: Coronavirus	44
■ British Nationals Abroad: Crime	32	■ Incontinence	44
■ Cameroon: Human Rights	33	■ Intensive Care: Doctors and Nurses	45
■ Cayman Islands: Politics and Government	33	■ Measles: Disease Control	45
■ Cyprus: Missing Persons	34	■ Medical Equipment	46
■ Guyana: Elections	34	■ Mental Health Services: Pupils	46
■ Guyana: Press Freedom	35	■ NHS: Public Lavatories	46
■ India: Elephants	35	■ Patients: Visual Impairment	46
■ Palestinians: Agricultural Products	35	■ Speech and Language Therapy: Recruitment	47
■ Saudi Arabia: Detainees	36	■ Visual Impairment: Health Services	47
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	37	HOME OFFICE	48
■ Blood Cancer: Diagnosis	37	■ EEA Nationals: Registration	48
■ Cancer: Children	37	■ Hate Crime: Sentencing	48
■ Childbirth: Analgesics	38	■ Immigration: EU Nationals	49
		■ Immigration: Northern Ireland	50
		■ Police: Biometrics	50

■ Public Sector: Trauma	50	■ Trains: Hydrogen	62
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	51	TREASURY	62
■ Hate Crime: Crime Prevention	51	■ Business: Coronavirus	62
■ Local Government: Coronavirus	51	■ Coronavirus: South Yorkshire	62
■ Temporary Accommodation: Standards	52	■ Incontinence	63
■ Travellers: Caravan Sites	52	■ Public Sector Debt	63
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	53	■ Whisky: Scotland	63
■ Compressed Natural Gas: Exports	53	■ Wines	63
■ Hydrogen: Exports	53	WORK AND PENSIONS	64
■ Quintessentially	53	■ Children: Maintenance	64
■ Trade Agreements: Mexico	54	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Disability	64
JUSTICE	54	■ Independent Case Examiner	65
■ Domestic Abuse: Sentencing	54	■ Pension Credit	65
■ Family Courts: Domestic Abuse	55	■ Poverty	67
■ Prisons and Community Orders: Coronavirus	55	■ Universal Credit	67
■ Prisons: Coronavirus	56	<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>69</b>
TRANSPORT	59	CABINET OFFICE	69
■ Blue Badge Scheme	59	■ Electoral Register: Digital Technology	69
■ Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure	59	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	69
■ Disruptive Airline Passengers Working Group	60	■ Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities: Finance	69
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	60	■ Trees	70
■ Heathrow Airport Holdings: Carbon Emissions	60	TRANSPORT	70
■ Luton Station: Finance	60	■ Heathrow Airport: Construction	70
■ Members: Correspondence	61	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>72</b>
■ Motor Vehicles: Compressed Natural Gas	61	DEFENCE	72
		■ Baseline Profit Rate 2020-21 for Single Source Defence Contracts	72

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	73	WORK AND PENSIONS	74
■ Delivery restrictions	73	■ Contingencies Fund Advance	74

**Notes:**

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.  
Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Biofuels

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[27584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the potential for on-farm generation of biogas.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[27585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the potential for on-farm refinement of biogas into compressed natural gas.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Biogas is produced through anaerobic digestion (AD) using biomass feedstocks such as food and on-farm waste (e.g. manure and slurries). Biogas can be used to generate electricity or heat (or both outputs in a CHP system). Alternatively, it can be upgraded into biomethane to directly replace natural gas in the gas grid. The Government supports AD as an effective treatment for organic waste that produces renewable fuel, heat or energy and a nutrient rich by-product, digestate, which can be used as a fertiliser.

Currently, biogas and biomethane produced by AD are supported by the non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive scheme (RHI). The RHI has funding confirmed for new deployment of renewable heat technologies until 31 March 2021. The Budget on 11 March confirmed a new allocation of flexible tariff guarantees on the non-domestic RHI and announced a new support scheme for biomethane production to increase the proportion of green gas in the grid, funded by a Green Gas Levy.

The Department engages regularly with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, at both ministerial and official level, on a range of issues including biogas.

#### ■ Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund: Wales

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[27583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2020 to Question 25168, how much of the Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund has been allocated to facilities in Wales.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund is still under development, and no funds have been allocated to date. The Government is working with industry to inform design of the scheme, and further details will be available later in 2020. We welcome

ongoing engagement with stakeholders in the region on a range of industrial decarbonisation options including low carbon hydrogen.

#### ■ **Post Offices: ICT**

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[25172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of the Government providing compensation in addition to that recently awarded by the Post Office to sub-postmasters found to have been innocent of accusations of theft as a result of the Post Office's Horizon IT system fault.

**Paul Scully:**

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

The settlement agreed with the Post Office included all legal and other costs. In those circumstances the Government cannot accept any further request for payment.

The Government wants to make sure lessons are learned from this case, so that such issues do not happen again, and it is of the upmost importance that the Post Office proceeds to undertake its dealings with postmasters openly and transparently. We will announce further details on this in due course.

#### ■ **Public Holidays: VE Day**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[27567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will reinstate the traditional May Day Bank Holiday on Monday 4 May 2020 and make Friday 8 May 2020 an additional bank holiday in 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has no plans to revisit the decision regarding the early May Bank Holiday.

Moving the early May Day Bank Holiday to mark VE Day is a right and fitting tribute to our heroes of the Second World War, and an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices of a very special generation. The decision ensures as many people as possible have the opportunity to pay a fitting tribute to members of the Armed Forces who have served and who continue to serve our country.

#### ■ **Small Businesses: Coronavirus**

**Darren Jones:**

[\[25722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will offer financial support to SMEs that become insolvent following payment of statutory sick pay relating to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government will support small and medium enterprises and individual employers to cope with the extra costs of paying COVID-19-related Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). Eligible SSP costs will be refunded for two weeks per employee from the day on which regulations extending SSP to self-isolators come into force. This will provide 2 million businesses with support worth up to £2 billion to cover the costs of large-scale sick leave.

**Alex Sobel:**[\[25731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to provide (a) financial and (b) other support to businesses in relation to (i) sick leave and (ii) self isolation for employees as a result of covid-19.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

At Budget 2020, the Government announced a £12 billion package of targeted measures to support public services, individuals, and businesses experiencing economic disruption because of COVID-19.

Measures include enabling small and medium enterprises and employers to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay for sickness absence due to COVID-19. We are also expanding the Business Rates retail discount to 100% for one year and providing £2.2 billion of funding for local authorities to support small businesses; they will be entitled to Small Business Rate Relief and a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19>.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Civil Servants: Recruitment****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[26826\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of Civil Service Fast Stream entrants graduated less than a year before starting the programme in each of the last five years.

**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[26827\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of civil servants at each grade are graduates of the Civil Service Fast Stream programme.

**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[26828\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department plans to publish the next Civil Service Fast Stream Annual Report.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[26829\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what indicators are used to measure the effectiveness of the Civil Service Fast Stream programme.

**Chloe Smith:**

We do not cross-tabulate information relating to the year of graduation for candidates recommended for appointment. This could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The Civil Service does not have post-programme tracking by grade for completed Fast Streamers.

The next Civil Service Fast Stream Annual Report will be published in due course. This report will include indicators.

Further information can be found in previous reports.

## ■ Constituencies

**Christian Matheson:** [\[26872\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to implement the recommendations of the 2018 Review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to [PQ 431](#) on the 9th January 2020.

## ■ DXC Technology

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[26880\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment has he made of (a) the level of dependence of Government services on DXC Technology and (b) the effect that company's stock market performance on the provision of its services.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government regularly monitors the performance and financial health of all our strategic suppliers, including those in the IT sector which include DXC Technology.

We remain in regular discussions with DXC's leadership team on the execution of their new strategy and continue to monitor their performance on Government contracts.

DXC appointed a new CEO in September 2019 who has launched a new strategy.

## ■ Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Public Appointments

**John Healey:** [\[27495\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2020 to Question 25623 on Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Public Appointments, which search company has been engaged to identify a shortlist of candidates; and by what date that company has been asked to return a shortlist.

**John Healey:**

[27496]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2020 to Question 25623, if he has set a deadline for a replacement panel member to be appointed.

**Chloe Smith:**

Further announcements will be made in the usual way.

## ■ Homelessness: Death

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[27499]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of homeless deaths in (a) the North West, (b) the North East, (c) Merseyside, (d) Wirral and (e) Wallasey in each year since 2010.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ27499.pdf]

## ■ List of Ministerial Responsibilities

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[27613]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2020 to Question 25034, how many times Ministerial responsibilities have changed since 11 October 2019 when the last updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities was published on gov.uk.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[27615]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2020 to Question 25033, what criteria the Government uses to determine when to publish an updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities on gov.uk.

**Chloe Smith:**

Ministerial responsibilities change for a variety of reasons, including following changes in appointments. Details of ministerial responsibilities can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Updates to the List of Ministerial Responsibilities document are made periodically to reflect the Government as it stands on the day of publication. An update will be published in due course.

**■ Ministerial Policy Advisers****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [25181]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March February 2020 to Question 22028, how much money has this Government spent on (a) recruiting and (b) dismissing special advisers since the Prime Minister took office.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [25182]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March February 2020 to Question 22028 on Ministerial Policy Advisers, for what reason costs relating to the (a) recruitment and (b) dismissal of special advisers are not contained in his Department's Annual Report on Special Advisers.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [25183]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 03 March February 2020 to Question 22028 on Ministerial Policy Advisers, whether any special advisers received payment as a result of a termination of their employment which was not in accordance with section 14b of the Model Contract for Special Advisers in the most recent reporting period for which figures are available.

**Chloe Smith:**

Special advisers are appointed in line with the provisions of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Model Contract for special advisers sets out notice and severance pay entitlements for special advisers upon termination of their employment.

Data related to the number and costs of special advisers are published annually. The most recent report was published 20 December 2019 and is available online and in the Library of the House.

**■ Prime Minister: Staff****Christian Matheson:** [26869]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of staff employed by No. 10 Downing Street (a) were educated at a private school, (b) are from an ethnic minority group, (c) are women and (d) are apprentices.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Prime Minister's Office is an integral part of the Cabinet Office.

Information about Cabinet Office staff is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/about/equality-and-diversity>

Information on the school background of staff is not held centrally.

The proportion of Cabinet Office staff actively completing an apprenticeship programme is 1.45%

**DEFENCE****■ Armed Forces: Housing**

**Nia Griffith:** [\[27548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has plans to publish an initial assessment of the results from the Future Accommodation Model pilots.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Future Accommodation Model (FAM) pilot was launched in September 2019 and will run for three years. The Ministry of Defence provides regular updates to the Public Accounts Committee and through the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report on the status of the FAM. In addition, Defence Ministers will update the House as we consider the full business case for FAM in 2022, when a decision on whether to roll out the FAM across other UK bases will be made; we will not be in a position to judge the success of the pilot until we have a complete picture in 2022.

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

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[27536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Prime Minister's written statement of 26 February 2020 on Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, if he will maintain the number of armed forces personnel at current levels for the next five years.

**James Heapey:**

The Integrated Review is conducting a whole-scale reassessment of our foreign, defence, security and development policy. It is too early to discuss specific capabilities, but I can assure the hon. Member that this country will continue to have the world class Armed Forces that it needs and deserves.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Rugby: Listed Events**

**Gavin Newlands:** [\[25133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Six Nations Rugby Limited and their representatives on their tournaments' listing under the terms outlined in Part IV of the Broadcasting Act 1996.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

I have had no such discussions with Six Nations Rugby Ltd or their representatives. The Government is clear that the existing list works well, and strikes the right balance between retaining free-to-air sports events for the public, and allowing rights holders to negotiate agreements in the best interests of their sport. The Government has no current plans of undertaking a review of the list, or of moving the Six Nations from the category B list to the category A list. As a Group B event, live coverage of the Six

Nations Rugby tournament may be broadcast by a subscription television service provided that secondary coverage is offered to the eligible free-to-air broadcasters.

**Gavin Newlands:** [\[25134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Rugby Union, (b) the Irish Rugby Football Union, (c) the Welsh Rugby Union and (d) the Rugby Football Union on the broadcasting of rugby union on free-to-air television.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

I have had no such discussions with the Scottish Rugby Union, the Irish Rugby Football Union, the Welsh Rugby Union or the Rugby Football Union. The Government is clear that the existing list works well, and strikes the right balance between retaining free-to-air sports events for the public, and allowing rights holders to negotiate agreements in the best interests of their sport. The Government has no current plans of undertaking a review of the list, or of moving the Six Nations from the category B list to the category A list. As a Group B event, live coverage of the Six Nations Rugby tournament may be broadcast by a subscription television service provided that secondary coverage is offered to the eligible free-to-air broadcasters.

## ■ Rugby: Wales

**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[25652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Six Nations and Rugby Authorities to ensure that Welsh rugby games will continue to be broadcast in the Welsh language.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

I have not had any discussions with Six Nations or any Rugby Authorities regarding the broadcasting of rugby games in the Welsh Language.

The Rugby League Challenge Cup Final, the Rugby World Cup Final and other games in the Rugby World Cup, and the Six Nations Rugby tournament are all included on the listed events regime, which ensures availability of live or delayed coverage respectively for qualifying free to air channels.

## ■ Television: Licensing

**Kate Osborne:** [\[27072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a TV license fee reduction for people with severe hearing impairment.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Under the Communications (Television Licensing) Regulations 2004, TV Licence concessions are available to people who are registered blind or severely sight impaired, people who live in qualifying residential care and are disabled or over 60 years old.

There are no further concessions available for people with severe hearing impairment and we are not considering making changes to the current concessions regime at this time.

The government has made clear that the TV Licence model will be reconsidered again ahead of the next Charter Review, which is set to be completed by 2027.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Disability and Special Educational Needs: Children

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[27677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have been off-rolled in (a) Sheffield, (b) Yorkshire and (c) the UK.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department has made clear the practice of off-rolling, whereby children are removed from school rolls without formal exclusion in ways that are in the interests of the school rather than the pupil, is unacceptable. Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful and we have previously written to schools to remind them of the rules on exclusions.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. The information requested the reason pupils are removed from the school register is not held centrally.

We are continuing to work with Ofsted to tackle the practice of off-rolling. Since September 2019, Ofsted's new education inspection framework details that where inspectors find off-rolling, this will always be addressed in the inspection report, and where appropriate, could lead to a school's leadership being judged inadequate.

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[27678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department has allocated to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in (a) Sheffield, (b) Yorkshire and (c) the UK in each of the last five years.

**Vicky Ford:**

Local authorities are required to provide mainstream schools with sufficient funds to enable them to meet the additional cost of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, up to the value of £6,000. This funding comes from the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

When the costs of additional support required for a pupil with SEN exceed £6,000, the local authority should also allocate additional top-up funding to cover the excess costs. This top-up funding, and all funding for special schools comes from the local authority's high needs budget. We recently announced £780 million additional high needs funding for the next financial year, and every local authority will see an increase in high needs funding, of at least 8% per head of population aged 2 to 18. Sheffield is receiving £66.7 million next year. The schools and high needs allocations for Sheffield since 2013-14 are as follows:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)</b>	<b>HIGH NEEDS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)</b>
2015-16	303.7	52.4
2016-17	307.9	52.8
2017-18	317.1	52.5*
2018-19	321.2	55.3
2019-20	332.5	57.2
2020-21	354.7	66.7

For Yorkshire and the Humber:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)</b>	<b>HIGH NEEDS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)</b>
2015-16	3,243.3	436.2
2016-17	3,278.5	442.1
2017-18	3,334.7	476.3
2018-19	3,389.8	512.6
2019-20	3,474.6	531.9
2020-21	3,657.0	616.7

For England:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)</b>	<b>HIGH NEEDS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)</b>
2015-16	32,168.1	5,246.5
2016-17	32,650.3	5,299.9

YEAR	SCHOOLS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)	HIGH NEEDS FUNDING AMOUNT (£ MILLIONS)
2017-18	33,093.6	5,826.8
2018-19	33,684.0	6,114.3
2019-20	34,502.6	6,277.5
2020-21	36,277.8	7,072.6

\*In 2017-18, funding was reallocated between schools and high needs, to better reflect individual local authorities' spending patterns. This led to an increase in school funding, and a decrease in high needs funding, for Sheffield, which had been spending more of its overall funding on schools, and less on high needs, compared to previous years' funding allocations.

#### ■ Disability and Special Educational Needs: Schools

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[27680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability special educational needs and disability services in schools in Sheffield.

**Vicky Ford:**

Our ambition is for every local authority and Clinical Commissioning Group to deliver a high quality service for every child or young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conduct inspections of SEND services in local areas. Their inspection of Sheffield, published in 2019, required a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to improve a number of areas of significant concern. Some of these concerns directly relate to SEND provision in schools and weaknesses in commissioning arrangements. Where we have concerns with performance, as there are in Sheffield, the department works with partners, including National Health Service (NHS) England, to support and challenge local areas to improve. This includes regular advice and monitoring from the department and NHS England advisers, as well as access to funded training opportunities and resources. A revisit from Ofsted and CQC then follows, usually around 18 months after publication of a WSOA.

We recently announced £780 million additional high needs funding, for the next financial year, and every local authority will see an increase in high needs funding, of at least 8% per head of population aged 2 to 18. Sheffield will be receiving £66.7 million next year.

We have also invested a total of £365 million through the Special Provision Capital Fund to help local authorities to create new places and improve facilities for pupils

with SEND. Sheffield has been allocated a total of £2.5 million from 2018-19 to 2020-21 through this fund.

In September 2019, we announced a cross-Government SEND Review to improve how children and young people with SEND are supported in a way which is consistent, high quality, and integrated across education, health and care.

## ■ Education: Refugees

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[25616\]](#)

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

**Nick Gibb:**

Refugee children in the UK must be treated as UK residents for the purposes of admission to schools in England. The School Admissions Code contains provisions to ensure that refugee children are able to secure a suitable school place.

All schools are required to give highest priority in their admissions criteria to looked after children and previously looked after children. Unaccompanied refugee children are looked after children and will therefore have highest priority for admission.

Outside the normal admissions round, every local authority is required to have a Fair Access Protocol to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, which specifically includes refugees, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible.

## ■ Music: Education

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[27501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to allocate additional (a) funding and (b) resources to the provision of music teaching in schools in (i) the North West, (ii) Merseyside, (iii) Wirral and (iv) Wallasey.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government believes that music is an important subject and that all pupils should receive a high-quality music education. The subject is compulsory in the national curriculum up to age 14.

To support schools to deliver high quality music education for all their pupils, the Government has provided funding of over £300 million for music education hubs across England between 2016 and 2020, including £76 million in 2019-20, and further funding to support hubs with the additional costs under the teachers' pension scheme. This is a significant increase over the £58 million we gave hubs in 2014.

The Government recently announced a further year's funding for music hubs, to help thousands more children learn to play musical instruments, as well as continued support for a range of smaller music and arts programmes, totalling £85 million. We will also be offering an 'arts premium' of £90 million each year for secondary schools in England from 2021 to fund enriching activities for all pupils.

The North West region is served by ten individual music education hubs, which in the coming year will receive between them over £9.6 million in funding.

Merseyside is served by the Merseyside Music Education Hub Alliance, a conglomerate of music hubs based in Warrington and Halton, Sefton and Knowsley, Liverpool and St Helens. In the 2020-21, we will be providing these hubs with over £2 million of funding to continue to support the region's schools to deliver high-quality music education. In 2016-17, the last year data for which data is available, these hubs provided individual lessons to over 2,400 pupils, small group lessons for over 5,800 pupils and whole class ensemble teaching to over 26,000 pupils. The hubs also supported or delivered 125 ensembles.

Wirral is served by the Musical Routes Music Education Hub. In 2020-21, the Government will be providing the hub with over £470,000 of funding. In 2016-17, the hub provided individual lessons to 850 pupils, small group lessons for over 1,200 pupils and whole class ensemble teaching to over 6,000 pupils. The hub also supported or delivered 25 ensembles.

The Government trusts that with the announced funding, the music education hubs in the North West will be able to continue their important work in supporting the schools in the region to deliver a high-quality music education for all their pupils.

## ■ Offences against Children

**Jess Phillips:**

[\[25671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that young people who have experienced abuse are able to access support services if they disclose domestic abuse in school; and what support is provided to teachers to deal with such disclosure.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department's statutory safeguarding guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) includes detailed information about all forms of harm and abuse, including domestic abuse, its impact on children and how to recognise the signs. KCSIE sets out that all school and college staff should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. Every school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who will provide advice and support to staff to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care. KCSIE is clear that if staff have any concerns about a child and/or a child makes a disclosure, they should follow the school or college's child protection policy, and speak to the DSL to seek support and advice on what to do next. Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care, and if appropriate the police, is made immediately.

Local authority children's social care should act as the principal point of contact for safeguarding concerns relating to children. Once a referral has been accepted, the lead practitioner role falls to a social worker. For children who are in need of

immediate protection and removal is required, action must be taken by the social worker, the police or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, as soon as possible after the referral has been made. It is essential that social workers provide effective support to children and families affected by domestic abuse. Our children's social care reform programme is working to improve social work practice across the country through initial education, continued professional development and tougher professional regulation.

### ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Angela Rayner:** [\[27587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take to support children eligible for free school meals in the event that schools are closed in response to the covid-19 outbreak, and if he will make a statement.

**Vicky Ford:**

The advice from Public Health England (PHE) remains that childcare facilities and schools should stay open unless advised otherwise by PHE. However, the department is aware that pupils eligible for free school meals will miss out if their school is closed, or they are asked to self-isolate. We are closely monitoring the situation, and we are working closely with other government departments to consider what action can be taken. We recognise the challenge this could place on families and schools and education providers.

The department has launched a dedicated telephone and email service to allow quick access to the latest help and support for schools and parents. The purpose of the helpline is to ensure consistent and accurate information reaches education providers and should help ensure providers feel well-supported.

Details of the helpline:

Phone: 0800 046 8687 (8am to 6pm - Monday to Friday)

Email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

### ■ Schools: Mental Health Services

**Olivia Blake:** [\[27681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of (a) primary and (b) secondary school budgets have been spent on tackling mental health problems in (i) Sheffield Hallam constituency, (ii) Yorkshire and (iii) the UK in each of the last five years; and what plans he has to maintain an adequate level of funding for those services in the next five years.

**Vicky Ford:**

The information requested is not held centrally. The Department for Education does not collect information on the proportion of school budgets which are spent on tackling mental health problems in England. Education policy in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is a matter for the devolved administrations.

The government is making a significant investment to increase mental health support for everyone including young people. The National Health Service (NHS) Long Term Plan set out that funding for mental health services will grow faster than the overall NHS budget, creating a new ringfenced local investment fund worth at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023-24. This includes a commitment that by 2023-24 at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 will be able to access support via NHS England's funded mental health services, including through new mental health support teams (MHSTs) that will work with a fifth to a quarter of schools and colleges in England by 2023.

The first MHST trailblazer sites were announced in December 2018. Two MHST sites in Yorkshire will deliver six teams in the first wave of implementation, starting this year. Last year, a further five MHST sites, one of which is an existing 18-19 trailblazer, were announced in Yorkshire to deliver a total of 10 further teams between them. Each team is expected to support up to 20 schools and colleges, or a population of around 8,000 children and young people.

## ■ Sex and Relationship Education

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[25624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the implementation of the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum does not lose schools the trust of parents who may disagree with the content or timing of it.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is committed to supporting all schools in their preparations to introduce relationships education (primary school pupils), relationships and sex education (secondary school pupils), and health education (all state-funded school pupils) from September 2020.

All schools will be required to have in place a written policy for relationships education, and relationships and sex education. Schools must consult parents in developing and reviewing their policy. Schools should ensure that the policy meets the needs of pupils and parents and reflects the community they serve. Schools should also consider how they can adopt a whole school approach to teaching the content of the statutory guidance.

The statutory guidance is clear that schools should ensure that when they consult parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use. They should also allow parents time and space to provide input, ask questions and share any concerns.

The Department has published parent guides explaining the subjects. They set out parents' rights and how they can engage positively in the development of their schools' policy. The guidance has advice, tips and case studies on how to carry out effective parental engagement, including where to go for help, and it sets out the role governors and trustees can play in the engagement process. The parent guides are

available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-sex-and-health-education-guides-for-schools>.

A thorough engagement process has informed the key decisions and implementation of these subjects, including responses from parents, schools, leading charities, teaching unions and subject associations.

**Jess Phillips:**

**[25670]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking through the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum to tackle the effect of domestic abuse on children.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department wants to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. Through the new subjects of relationships, sex and health education, we want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society.

These subjects will help in ensuring all young people, at age appropriate points, know the signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships and that violence in relationships and domestic abuse is unlawful and never acceptable. Throughout these subjects there is a focus on ensuring pupils know how to get further support.

Specifically, the guidance sets out that relationships and sex education will cover the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, forced marriage, rape, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation, and how these can affect current and future relationships. The guidance can be accessed via the following link:

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

**Jess Phillips:**

**[25672]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many hours of training teachers will receive to deliver the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is committed to supporting schools to deliver high quality teaching of relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education.

Many schools are already teaching aspects of these subjects as part of their relationships and sex education provision or personal, social, health and economic education programme. Schools have flexibility to determine how to deliver the new content, in the context of a broad and balanced curriculum. The Department expects that schools will take a variety of approaches and not limit the delivery to taught lessons.

To support schools in their preparations, the Department is investing in a central package to help all schools to increase the confidence and quality of their teaching practice. We are currently developing a new online service featuring innovative training materials, case studies and support to access resources. This will be

available from April 2020 with additional content added through the summer term, covering all of the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance. We will also publish an implementation guide which will be provided to all schools as part of this service and face-to-face training offers will be available for schools that need additional support.

The Department is currently working with lead teachers, non-specialist teachers, schools and subject experts to develop this central programme of support to help ensure it meets the needs of schools and teachers. It will complement the wide range of training opportunities that are being provided by local authorities and sector organisations.

## ■ Social Services: Children

**Jess Phillips:**

[\[25677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding the Government has allocated to the training of children's social care workers in the last three years.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Department for Education funds the training of children's social care workers through fast-track initial education courses for students intending to become child and family social workers and for continuing professional development programmes. The amounts for the last three years are set out in the table below.

In addition and separate to this funding, there is a cross-government commitment and the Department for Health and Social Care funds the training of child and family social workers through investment in bursaries and other support for those following general courses of initial social work education.

2017-18 (£)	2018-19 (£)	2019-20 (£)
27,892,545	38,953,709	33,588,569

## ■ T-levels

**Antony Higginbotham:**

[\[25208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made on the roll-out of T levels.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are making good progress and remain on track for the introduction of the first three T levels this September. A further seven T levels will be delivered in 2021, completing the construction and digital routes and introducing T levels from the health and science route.

We have appointed awarding organisations to deliver T levels for 2020 and 2021 and expect to award contracts for 2022 T levels in the autumn.

We have an extensive programme of support for providers and employers to get them ready to deliver Industry Placements under T levels. Funding of nearly £60 million in 2018/19 and nearly £55 million in 2019/20 has helped providers to build capacity and deliver T level industry placements, with over 18,000 T level-style placements already successfully completed in 2018/19 and many more expected this academic year.

Up to March 2020, £20 million has been allocated to help teachers and leaders prepare for the introduction of T levels, with a further investment of £15 million for 2020/21.

We want T level students to have access to the latest, high quality equipment and state-of-the-art facilities during their studies. £38 million capital funding supports the 2020 rollout and we have announced an extra £95 million to help upgrade the facilities of 2021 providers.

### ■ Universities: Coronavirus

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[27566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support the Government plans to provide to UK universities to help compensate for a potential loss of income in the event that there are decreases in the number of overseas students attending those universities as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

We recognise that the impact of the covid-19 outbreak will pose a significant challenge to institutional management, efficiency and financial planning.

The Department for Education is working closely with the Office for Students, which will monitor the impact of covid-19, among other factors, on the financial health of registered English higher education (HE) providers. We are also working with Universities UK, which has established a coordination group of HE institutions and other sector bodies to prepare for the effects of an outbreak.

### ■ Violence: Advisory Services

**Jess Phillips:**

[\[25673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many FTE young people's violence advisors are employed in England and Wales.

**Vicky Ford:**

The information requested is not held centrally. Data on the number of FTE young people's violence advisors employed in England and Wales is not collected by my department.

Young people's violence advisors are either employed by local authorities or organisations like SafeLives who then work with local authorities.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Agriculture: Biodiversity****Alex Sobel:**[\[26168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage biodiversity in agriculture.

**Alex Sobel:**[\[26169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage agriculture that supports bee populations.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This is a devolved matter, and the information provided relates to England only. Across the country, the Government is investing in restoring wildlife-rich habitats and supporting species recovery, including within agricultural environments.

The Government provides substantial public funding for managing protected sites and restoring wildlife habitats, spending £2.9 billion on agri-environment schemes in England through our 7-year Rural Development Programme. Through our programme we encourage farmers and land managers to manage their land to protect and enhance the natural environment by improving biodiversity. For pollinators specifically, the Countryside Stewardship 'wildlife offers' provide payments for farmers and landowners to plant nectar and pollen-rich plants for insect pollinators and are now open for applications for agreements starting in 2021.

Looking to the future, our new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme will be the cornerstone of our agricultural policy. Founded on the principle of "public money for public goods", ELM is intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to net zero emissions, while supporting our rural economy.

Thriving plants and wildlife are public goods identified in the 25 Year Environment Plan and an important objective for ELM. ELM will provide funding for the management of habitats to support this objective.

The 25 Year Environment Plan also sets out the government's plans to put Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at the heart of our approach. We are undertaking a review of the National Action Plan on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides which will focus on the development and introduction of IPM and of alternatives to pesticides.

We work to ensure and encourage specific action for pollinators through each of these and other initiatives, with our partners on the National Pollinator Strategy. The Strategy sets out how Government, conservation groups, farmers, beekeepers and researchers can work together to improve the status of pollinating insect species in England, on and beyond farmland.

## ■ Air Pollution and Volatile Organic Compounds

**Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:**

[\[25027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to reduce the level of permitted (a) particulates emissions and (b) volatile organic compounds.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Our Clean Air Strategy, published in 2019, set out the comprehensive action required across all parts of Government and society to reduce our emissions of five key pollutants, including particulates and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), to meet legally binding targets for 2020 and 2030.

Our landmark Environment Bill delivers key parts of the Strategy. It introduces a duty to set a legally binding target for fine particulate matter, in addition to a further long term air quality target. It also provides Government with new powers to enforce environmental standards for vehicles and non-road mobile machinery and ensures that local authorities have more effective powers and a clear framework for tackling air pollution in their areas.

In addition, we have recently announced plans to introduce secondary legislation to phase out the sale of traditional house coal, high-sulphur manufactured solid fuels and small quantities of wet wood; and Public Health England have published guidelines to reduce the health impacts of selected VOCs in UK homes and offices. These actions will all help tackle emissions of particulates and VOCs.

## ■ Air Pollution: Standards

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[26171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK meets World Health Organisation 2030 targets for levels of fine particulate matter.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Our Clean Air Strategy, published in January 2019, set out the comprehensive action required across all parts of Government to improve air quality and reduce public exposure to particulate matter pollution, alongside other pollutants. Our analysis, published in July 2019, concluded that while significant progress would be made towards the WHO guideline level for PM2.5 through the actions outlined in the Clean Air Strategy, additional action would be required in large urban areas such as London.

The Environment Bill delivers key parts of the Clean Air Strategy, and establishes a duty to set a legally-binding target for PM2.5. We are committed to following an evidence-based process to set this target, seeking advice from a range of experts, in addition to giving consideration to the WHO's air quality guidelines. We need to ensure that this target is based on realistic pathways, robust science and full

economic analysis to ensure that it is both ambitious and achievable, focusing on how the greatest public health benefits can be achieved.

## ■ **Badgers: Hedgehogs**

**Chris Grayling:** [\[25631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the effect of the rise in the badger population on the number of hedgehogs.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra has not made an estimate of the effect of the rise in badger population on the number of hedgehog in England. However, we are aware of research by the National Wildlife Management Centre and others in 2014 which demonstrated that badger removal had positive impacts on hedgehog numbers within grassland sites.

The Department 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.

## ■ **Bridleways**

**Antony Higginbotham:** [\[25744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has in place to improve access for (a) horse riders, (b) dog walkers and (c) runners on bridleways.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Agriculture Bill currently before Parliament sets out how farmers and land managers in England will in future be rewarded with public money for public goods including improved access to the countryside. These improvements should benefit horse riders and pedestrians on bridleways and other paths.

Local highway authorities are also required to maintain a rights of way improvement plan which should consider the needs of multiple types of user.

## ■ **Countryside Stewardship Scheme and Nature Reserves: Expenditure**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[25643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much Natural England spent on site management per hectare for (a) national nature reserves and (b) Higher Level Stewardship Agreements in each of the last ten years.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The total area of National Nature Reserves (NNR) managed by Natural England is approximately 60,000 ha. The table below sets out the breakdown of funding year on year.

Pre-2014 data is not held centrally and to obtain it would incur disproportionate costs.

YEAR	£	HA	£ / HA
2014/15	£4,977,000	60000	£83
2015/16	£3,986,000	60000	£66
2016/17	£2,957,100	60000	£49
2017/18	£3,184,000	60000	£53
2018/19	£3,197,000	60000	£53
2019/20	£3,233,000	60000	£54

It is not possible to provide a figure for site management spend per hectare under Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements. Hectarage is based on a scheme year while the payments are based on a calendar year. The table below sets out the amount of HLS payment value every year in England since 2010.

YEAR	TOTAL
2010	£96,848,808
2011	£117,519,353
2012	£141,073,804
2013	£182,878,594
2014	£204,930,051
2015	£163,085,900
2016	£154,369,818
2017	£146,954,501
2018	£128,842,685
2019	£179,031,585

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff****Caroline Lucas:**[\[25641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many officials in his Department with responsibility for adaptation to climate change including flooding have been in post in each financial year from 2010-11 to present; and for what reasons there have been changes in the numbers of those positions each year.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government's commitment to addressing the risks from climate change is as strong as ever. The Prime Minister's climate change committee will drive further action across Government and we recognise the benefits of taking early actions. The United Kingdom has been a leader in this area for more than a decade; while continuing to reduce our contribution to climate change, we are also taking robust action to improve the resilience of our people, economy and environment.

In line with our 25 Year Environment Plan, the second National Adaptation Programme (NAP) sets out an ambitious range of actions that the Government will implement in the following five years.

The second NAP is informed by the second Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) which was published in 2017 and highlights priority risk areas such as flooding and coastal change risks to communities and infrastructure; risks to health and wellbeing from high temperatures; and risks to natural capital (including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems).

Adaptation is rightly integrated throughout the policies and programmes of Government. The NAP is a cross-department collaboration, bringing together Government's policies on managing climate risks in one place.

This means that teams across Government are involved in a wide range of adaptation activity. Within Defra, this includes embedding adaptation into biodiversity, agriculture, peat, water, and floods' policies and programmes, amongst others. Beyond Defra, adaptation is mainstreamed into areas such as housing, infrastructure and health. The mainstreaming of adaptation across Government makes it difficult to ascertain exact numbers on staffing who have responsibility for adaptation embedded into their roles.

Defra is the overall lead Department for climate adaptation, though responsibility for ensuring that policies and programmes are climate resilient lies across Departments and policy leads. Our support to the updated UK climate projections (UKCP18), published in 2018, provides an additional tool to help everyone better understand the changes to climate and its risks and make decisions on that basis. This will make an important contribution to building resilience throughout the UK.

## ■ Fishing Catches

**Luke Pollard:** [\[25733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish information his Department has commissioned on estimating fish weights when compiling fishing vessel logbooks or catch returns.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has not commissioned any formal assessment on estimating fish weights when compiling fishing vessel logbooks or catch returns. We know most fishers operate in good faith and will make efforts to report their catches accurately. For those fishers that want to be more precise the use of a set of scales gives them that accuracy.

## ■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software

**Luke Pollard:** [\[26964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who (a) requested and (b) authorised the removal from the Government Digital Services website of the original published report of the Record your catches beta assessment and its replacement with an edited version on 12 February 2020.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Following concerns raised from the public about the wording used within the report, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) contacted the Government Digital Service (GDS) to request that this was removed from their website. An amended version removing the content causing offence was then published at the request of the MMO.

The wording used within the original report comes from independent research undertaken during the initial process of developing the catch recording app. It does not reflect the views of the MMO, Defra or GDS.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[26965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the contract for development of the catch recording app for under 10m fishing vessels was awarded; what the value of that contract is; how much has been spent on that contract to date; and which company was awarded that contract.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The catch recording application formed part of a wider procurement programme for digital transformation services and was procured through the GOV.UK Digital Marketplace. The contract was awarded to Engine Partners UK LLP (The Engine Group) on 1 August 2018. Catch recording costs to date are £1,530,808 (minus VAT). Full details of the contract awarded and its total value are available at the following site: <https://www.digitalmarketplace.service.gov.uk/digital-outcomes-and-specialists/opportunities/6866>.

## ■ Litter: Yorkshire and the Humber

**Alex Sobel:**

[26170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the amount of litter in cities in Yorkshire and the Humber.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is committed to encouraging local solutions for local problems. This is particularly relevant in dealing with litter and fly-tipping problems, which require a local approach, tailored to the characteristics of the area and the community in which the problems occur.

The role of central Government, as set out in the Litter Strategy for England, is to enable and support this local action: providing a clear legal framework of rights, responsibilities and powers, setting national standards and, where possible, making sure that the costs of dealing with litter issues are passed to those responsible for causing the problem.

The Government has increased the fixed penalties available for councils to enforce against littering offences to up to £150; extended powers to the whole of England to issue civil penalties to the keeper of a vehicle from which litter is thrown; and recently published improved guidance to councils and others on the use of these powers.

This spring, we also will be publishing guidance to help local authorities and Business Improvement Districts plan the most effective bin provision for their local area, making it easier for people to do the right thing and dispose of their waste correctly. This will be supported by a £2 million capital grants scheme later in the year, to assist with the purchase of new 'bininfrastructure'.

## ■ Nature Reserves

**Caroline Lucas:**

[25642]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of national nature reserves (a) are at and (b) exceed favourable condition.

**Rebecca Pow:**

53% of National Nature Reserves (NNR) are currently estimated to be in favourable condition. Natural England do not have data which distinguishes between NNR units being 'at' and units that 'exceed' favourable condition.

NNR condition data is publicly available on Natural England's Designated Sites View:

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteType=NNR>

## ■ Seabed: Bomb Disposal

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[26129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidance his Department has issued to the Marine Management Organisation on removal of

unexploded ordnance from the seabed using low order disposal technology; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Edward Davey:** [\[26130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of (a) high and (b) low order unexploded ordnance disposal on marine wildlife; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Edward Davey:** [\[26131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken in response to the recommendations of the SRUC Wildlife Unit's report of the Investigation into long-finned pilot whale mass stranding event, Kyle of Durness, 22 July 2011, published in 2015, on unexploded ordnance disposal; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra recognises the significant impact underwater noise from ordnance clearance and other activities can have on vulnerable marine species. We are working closely with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), other Government departments including the Ministry of Defence, statutory nature conservation bodies and marine industries to manage and reduce underwater noise.

The underwater noise impact of using low order deflagration techniques for unexploded ordnance detonations is currently being researched by Hartley Anderson on behalf of the Defra Group. The MMO is an active member of the Steering Group which is helping to progress this research. Closed water trials took place in 2019 and sea trials of the technology are planned for 2020. Defra does not expect to issue formal guidance on the use of low-order deflagration techniques until this research has been completed.

## ■ Tourism: Elephants

**Tracey Crouch:** [\[25072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will hold discussions with representatives of the British tourism industry on the advertisement of attractions involving Asian elephants.

**Tracey Crouch:** [\[25073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has held with representatives of tour operators on the advertising of holiday attractions involving Asian elephants.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra officials continue to be in regular contact with representatives from the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) on the issue of the welfare of elephants in tourist attractions overseas. I was pleased that ABTA recently updated its members' animal welfare guidelines to include specific advice about this issue.

## ■ Tree Planting: Urban Areas

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[25190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the Government's progress in increasing the number of trees (a) on streets and (b) in urban environments.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is committed to increasing the number of trees on streets and in urban environments, in and around the places where most people live and work.

In 2019, we launched the £10 million Urban Tree Challenge Fund which is providing matched funding to councils, charities, community groups, private sector bodies and individuals to plant 130,000 trees, including 20,000 street trees, in our towns and cities.

In addition, we are giving hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren across England, mostly in urban areas, the opportunity to plant trees in schools and local communities, as part of our 1 million Trees for Schools programme in partnership with the Community Forest Trust and the Woodland Trust.

The Environment Bill includes new duties on councils to consult when felling street trees and increased penalties for illegal felling. As part of our 25 Year Environment Plan, we have worked with stakeholders to develop and publish an Urban Tree Manual and we are developing policies to ensure all new streets are lined with trees. These measures will help to ensure councils pick the right trees in terms of biosecurity, value for money, air quality impact and biodiversity.

## ■ Trees

**Chris Grayling:**

[\[25632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of trees growing in England in each of the last three decades.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Forestry Commission produces statistics annually on woodland area in England but not by tree numbers. These are Official Statistics produced to meet the standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics. Woodland area statistics can be found on the Forest Research web site together with background information at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/>

The below figures are reported in Forestry Statistics and use data from the National Forest Inventory:

Year at 31 March | Thousand acres

---

1989	1,201
1994	1,224
1999	1,246
2004	1,272
2009	1,288
2014	1,302
2019	1,308

Source: Forestry Statistics 2019

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ British Nationals Abroad: Crime

**Kate Green:** [\[25662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what guidance his Department has issued to UK (a) embassies and (b) consular offices on collaboration with local police forces in the event that a UK citizen is the victim of a serious crime.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) produces internal guidance for staff to assist British nationals who have been affected by crimes abroad. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it is up to date. The FCO also works with a law enforcement adviser who advises consular staff who are supporting British victims of crime overseas.

Information on the consular assistance the FCO can provide to British nationals overseas can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide>.

**Kate Green:** [\[25664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to inform family members of victims of serious crimes overseas of the outcome of local police investigations.

**Nigel Adams:**

Anyone who is a victim of crime overseas can contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 24/7 for advice. The FCO can give general information about local police and legal procedures. In many countries, investigating authorities and the courts may refuse to answer enquiries from other people and organisations,

including consular staff. In such circumstances, we may advise people to consider appointing a local lawyer to look after their interests in court, and follow any trial. More information on consular assistance for victims of crime overseas is set out on page 15 of Support for British nationals abroad: a guide.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide>.

## ■ **Cameroon: Human Rights**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[25023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Cameroon; and whether he has made representations to his Cameroonian counterpart on reports of the killing of civilians in Ngarbuh village on 14 February 2020.

**James Duddridge:**

The British Government remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. These regions suffer from high levels of violence, which have driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. We have consistently called for an end to the violence, and for investigations into all reports of human rights violations. On 19 February, I issued a statement about the appalling attacks on 14 February in Ngarbuh and called for an urgent and transparent investigation so that the perpetrators can be held accountable.

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

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

## ■ **Cayman Islands: Politics and Government**

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[25741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential political effect of proposed amendments to section 81 of the Cayman Islands' constitution which would (a) remove the power of the Governor to legislate when the Cayman Islands Government Legislature fails to act to protect human

rights, (b) require Caymanian citizens seeking redress in their home jurisdiction to travel to London to do so from either the Crown or Parliament and (c) potentially leave the UK in breach of a range of international commitments.

**Wendy Morton:**

The process of amending the Cayman Islands Constitution is not yet complete. All elements of the constitutional reform package have been extensively reviewed to ensure that human rights in the Cayman Islands are protected and that the UK Government's ability to uphold its international law commitments is maintained.

■ **Cyprus: Missing Persons**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[25086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he made at his meeting on 3 March 2020 with his Turkish counterpart on reports of people who disappeared after Turkey's invasion of Cyprus.

**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 UK shares the concerns of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities over the missing persons following the events of 1974, which understandably remains a very sensitive issue. We commend the important work being undertaken by the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP), and the contribution it makes to bringing closure for the many families affected. We facilitate the CMP including by enabling it to work from a British-owned site in the Buffer Zone at minimal cost. In June 2019, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus was granted access by Turkey to 30 additional military areas in the north of the island that could contain burial sites. Nonetheless, there is certainly still further progress to be made.

■ **Guyana: Elections**

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[27628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of and (b) support he has offered to resolve the ongoing accusations of fraud during the recent presidential election in Guyana.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is deeply concerned by events following the elections in Guyana on 2 March 2020, as set out in a statement by the Foreign Secretary on 10 March. We call upon the President to preserve the principle of free, fair and credible elections. Allegations of electoral fraud and premature declarations of victory prior to the completion of a credible process pose a grave threat to the democratic principles of Guyana.

We stand ready to offer assistance to ensure a credible election result is produced.

## ■ Guyana: Press Freedom

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[27629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken to help ensure that freedom of the press is maintained in Guyana.

**Wendy Morton:**

The British Government is fully committed to promoting freedom of expression and freedom of the press in Guyana. Indeed, Guyana has a variety of print and online media who express divergent views. We believe that media freedom is vital for healthy societies everywhere and that journalists ought to be able to investigate and report without undue interference. The UK and Guyana have a close dialogue on a number of bilateral and global issues of mutual interest, including on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. On 10 March, the Foreign Secretary released a public statement calling for the preservation of free, fair and credible elections, and offered assistance to ensure that a credible election outcome is produced.

## ■ India: Elephants

**Tracey Crouch:**

[\[25074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the treatment of endangered Asian elephants in that country.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Government takes reports of animal cruelty throughout the world seriously and is committed to raising standards of animal welfare at home and abroad. We welcome Prime Minister Modi's passion for preserving and protecting India's diverse wildlife. The Government continues to engage on the issue, including at the India-hosted COP13 of the Convention of Migratory Species in Gujarat from 16-20 February where ten new species were afforded increased protection, including Asian Elephants. Modi spoke to the conference about India's successes, including initiatives to protect Asian elephants.

The former Prime Minister raised elephant welfare with the Government of India in 2015, when Prime Minister Modi confirmed India had laws in place to protect elephants.

## ■ Palestinians: Agricultural Products

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[27616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure UK businesses can trade with the Palestinian territories following the restrictions placed on the export of Palestinian agricultural goods by Israel.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is concerned about the impact of recent Israeli trade restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We are committed to supporting Palestinian

economic development, and strongly support the principle of free trade. Businesses should be free to import Palestinian products without barriers. Her Majesty's Ambassador to Israel has raised this issue with the Government of Israel, most recently on 12 February. We welcome the agreement reached by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, on 20 February, to lift their respective trade restrictions. We urge both sides to ensure the continued implementation of this agreement and will monitor the situation.

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[27617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on Israel's imposition of restrictions on the export of Palestinian agricultural products.

**James Cleverly:**

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

## ■ Saudi Arabia: Detainees

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[25038\]](#)

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

**James Cleverly:**

We regularly raise the detention of minors with the Saudi authorities as part of our engagement on human rights. We are particularly concerned about reports of the death penalty being used for juveniles. The Saudis are well aware of the UK's opposition to the use of the death penalty. This was last raised by the former Minister for the Middle East and North Africa with the Saudi Deputy Justice Minister in February.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Blood Cancer: Diagnosis****Henry Smith:**[\[25075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reduce the number of people who first receive a diagnosis of blood cancer in hospital A&E units.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out an ambition that, by 2028, the proportion of cancers diagnosed at stages 1 and 2 will rise from around half to three-quarters of cancer patients.

Other key actions to increase an early diagnosis of blood cancer are:

- campaigns to raise greater awareness of the symptoms of cancer;
- lowering the threshold for referral by general practitioners (GPs);
- accelerate access to diagnosis and treatment and maximise the number of cancers that specialist's can identify through screening; and
- roll-out of new Rapid Diagnostic Centres across the country to
- upgrade and bring together the latest diagnostic equipment and expertise.

The Long Term Plan also commits to invest £4.5 billion of new funding to establish Primary Care Networks based on neighbouring GP practices. The GP Contract, published on 6 February 2020, includes a new service specification for supporting early cancer diagnosis, including blood cancer.

**■ Cancer: Children****Wes Streeting:**[\[26896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress the Government is making in tackling (a) childhood cancers and (b) diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

A revised Service Specification for Children's Cancer Services is due to be published, by NHS England and NHS Improvement, in April 2020. This follows an extensive review of children's cancer services with the support of the Children's and Young People's Cancer Clinical Reference Group.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are aware that there are a number of clinical trials underway for diffuse midline glioma. Should a relevant evidence base arise from these clinical trials, a Provisional Policy Proposal would need to be submitted for consideration, in line with our published methods.

**■ Childbirth: Analgesics**

**Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:** [\[25705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to enforce the NICE guidelines on offering epidurals to women in labour.

**Helen Whately:**

All expectant mothers should be able to make an informed choice about pain relief any time before and during labour, knowing that their choice would be fully respected if it is safe to do so.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Nadine Dorries MP) is writing to all Heads and Directors of Midwifery and Medical Directors at NHS trusts to remind them of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance regarding pain relief during childbirth to ensure it is being followed.

**■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Finance**

**Jack Brereton:** [\[25726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the deprivation index on the methodology used to calculate funding for clinical commissioning groups; and how the deprivation rating of each area is determined.

**Jack Brereton:** [\[25727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the market forces factors for NHS funding are determined; and what assessment he has made of the effect of market forces factors on the funding allocated to each clinical commissioning group.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England is responsible for funding allocations to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). This process is independent of government and NHS England takes advice on the underlying formula from the independent Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation. CCG allocations take account of health inequalities and unmet need. The approach was updated in 2019/20 and further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/note-on-ccg-allocations-2019-20-2023-24.pdf>

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for the design of tariff, including the Market Forces Factor. The approach and underlying data were updated in 2019/20. These changes have been introduced on a five-year glide path to ensure stability for the sector. Further information can be found in the guide available at the following link:

[https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/475/Guide to the market forces factor.pdf](https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/475/Guide%20to%20the%20market%20forces%20factor.pdf)

## ■ Coronavirus: Health Education

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[25732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with the media to inform the public of the health effects of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have been working closely with partners in the media – including through regular press briefings with the Chief Medical Officer to ensure the latest advice on COVID-19 is widely accessible.

Ministers across Government including the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Prime Minister, as well as infectious disease experts at Public Health England have spoken to the media frequently to ensure the public are kept well informed.

On top of this, a public health campaign was launched on 2 February to ensure people have access to the latest advice in relation to coronavirus. This includes targeted national television, radio, social media and newspaper advertisements.

The campaign advises on the best way for the public to protect themselves against COVID-19, through carrying tissues, and hand washing.

It was refreshed on 4 March to include the latest messaging on handwashing with water and soap for 20 seconds.

All of our advice is published on [Gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus), alongside daily updates with confirmed numbers of tests, positive cases and deaths.

Our public health advice is regularly shared with local authorities, schools, general practitioner practices, and pharmacies to ensure they can display the advice in their own settings.

## ■ Coronavirus: Medical Equipment

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[27664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of Health and Social Care what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS Trusts have adequate financial resources to (a) purchase additional and (b) maintain ventilators; what plans he has to allocate additional funding to NHS Trusts should they require extra ventilator equipment in the event of an influx of patients with covid-19; and whether ventilators will be provided to at risk patients at home.

**Edward Argar:**

The Chancellor has set out a £12 billion package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, individuals and businesses through the economic disruption caused by COVID-19.

We are scaling up intensive care beds. NHS England is looking at National Health Service organisations critical care capacity - including the availability of additional facilities of independent sector providers.

It is also making sure that they have as much ventilation equipment as possible and, crucially, the skilled and trained people to use it.

There are no plans to provide ventilators at home as this would not be viable.

## ■ Coronavirus: Pharmacy

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[27668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that supplies of over-the-counter medications are maintained in the event of an outbreak of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

The country is well prepared to deal with any impacts of COVID-19 and we have stockpiles of generic drugs, including some over-the-counter medicines, in the event of any supply issues.

The Department is working closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to help ensure patients can access the medicines they need, and precautions are in place to reduce the likelihood of future shortages.

The steps being taken to protect United Kingdom supplies in response to the COVID-19 outbreak were set out in the Department's press statement issued on 11 February 2020. This statement can be read at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-monitor-impact-of-coronavirus-on-uk-medicine-supply>

## ■ Coronavirus: Social Services

**Sarah Owen:** [\[27665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure the provision of services to people receiving care in their homes during the delay phase of the Government's response to covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

We know social care will be at the frontline of our response to COVID-19, with social care providers looking after many of the most vulnerable in society.

Social care guidance is being worked on urgently and is due to be published in due course.

Officials are working with the local government associations, Public Health England and NHS England on continuity planning, to support social care providers.

**Sarah Owen:** [\[27667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to ensure care companies and care workers are adequately supported and protected in the event of a large scale outbreak of covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

Public Health England have published guidance for companies and care workers. This advice will be regularly updated as the scale of the outbreak increases. The guidance is available at the following link:

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

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

**■ Dental Services: West Midlands****Jon Trickett:****[27497]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason NHS England has stopped commissioning orthodontic services throughout the West Midlands.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England is responsible for commissioning orthodontic services from specialist practitioners in primary care, to meet local need.

NHS England halted orthodontic services in the Midlands region due to concerns about the way the process was managed. Across the region NHS England has extended all existing providers contracts for a further two years, which will now expire in 2022.

NHS England will be working across its national team and Midlands region to undertake a lessons learned exercise. This exercise will inform the decision making around the next steps for orthodontic procurements across those regions.

**■ Diabetes: Medical Equipment****Steve McCabe:****[26807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what percentage of people with type 1 diabetes have been prescribed a flash glucose monitoring in each clinical commissioning group since April 2019; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement estimates that in primary care, flash glucose monitoring uptake has increased markedly in all regions since April 2019. National uptake is now estimated to be 24% of all type 1 patients which is an increase of 19 percentage points from the start of the programme (1 April 2019).

It should be noted that NHS England and NHS Improvement have activity reporting for the prescribing of flash glucose monitors up to and including the end of Quarter 3 of this financial year. Due to differences in the way activity is reported between secondary and primary care, only primary care activity at clinical commissioning group (CCG) level can be reported. This data is aggregated at a national and regional level. Some flash glucose monitors are prescribed via secondary care, but NHS

England and NHS Improvement do not have this activity broken down by individual CCG. Patient population data is based on the National Diabetes Audit 2017/18.

### ■ Gender Recognition: Clinics

**Ms Angela Eagle:** [\[27500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for treatment at gender identity clinics.

**Jo Churchill:**

In 2018 NHS England published two new service specifications for adult gender identity services, formed through a process of extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation. NHS England and NHS Improvement have now completed several procurements to identify which organisations are best placed for future delivery of these services.

In addition, NHS England will pilot new gender dysphoria services for adults in 2020/21 in a number of localities across England, following which national rollout will be considered. The first of the new services will be established in London at a National Health Service HIV and sexual health clinic in Soho, the planned 'go live' date is April 2020.

These new services will increase the number of patients that are able to access specialised services and reduce waiting times.

### ■ General Practitioners

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[27640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of full-time equivalent GPs in (a) 2020 and (b) 2015.

**Jo Churchill:**

The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors working in general practice in England in each year since September 2015 is presented in the following table.

Data on the number of doctors working general practice in 2020 is not yet published

	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
	September 2015	September 2016	September 2017	September 2018	September 2019
All general practitioners (GPs)	34,429	35,229	34,653	34,534	34,862

Source: NHS Digital

Notes:

1. Data as at 30 September.
2. Figures shown do not include GPs working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings.
3. Each period, figures contain estimates, for practices that did not provide fully valid General Medical Practice GP records.
4. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. 1 would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that they worked half time. In Registrars' contracts 1 FTE = 40 hours. To ensure consistency, these FTEs have been converted to the standard wMDS measure of 1 FTE = 37.5 hours in the table.

### ■ **General Practitioners: Training**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[27641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on increasing the number of GP training places.

**Jo Churchill:**

The number of doctors accepting a place on general practitioner (GP) speciality training has been increasing year on year. In 2019, 3,540 doctors accepted a place on GP specialty training against a target of 3,250, and a further 3,500 places are now being offered this year. From 2021, the Government is committed to funding the increase of GP training places to 4,000 a year.

The GP training model will also undergo significant reform, from 2022, to support better training for GPs, and a more balanced distribution of trainee capacity across the National Health Service as the proportion of time that GP trainees spend in general practice during their training will rise from 18 months to 24 months.

### ■ **Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[25720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to prevent copycat EHIC websites from charging applicants for European Health Insurance Cards.

**Edward Argar:**

Internet search engines are repeatedly reviewed for copycat websites, with data reported to relevant parties and subsequent removal of the copycat websites. Government Digital Service leads on a cross Government group investing in tackling phishing and scamming activities across public services. We also collaborate with other organisations that are able to take action against the owners of these sites and provide evidence to the National Trading Standards Board e-crime unit to assist with on-going prosecutions.

## ■ Hospital Beds

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[27636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the average bed occupancy rate in hospitals.

**Edward Argar:**

Bed availability and occupancy is managed at a local level. Hospitals have a responsibility in ensuring that they are operating with the necessary beds available to support effective patient flow and safety.

There has been a long-term trend in the reduction of beds open overnight. A shift towards day case procedures, along with decreasing average length of stay, has reduced the demand for overnight beds in hospital.

NHS England publishes quarterly information on the numbers of available and occupied beds open overnight or day only in National Health Service organisations in England these data are available at the following links:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/bed-data-overnight/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/bed-data-day-only/>

## ■ Hospital Beds: Coronavirus

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[27637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of a bed occupancy rate above 85 per cent in hospitals on the adequacy of treatment of patients with covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

Bed occupancy rates are an important indicator, with COVID-19 requiring an increase in intensive care beds specifically.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care confirmed on 9 March, *Official Report*, column 25, that the National Health Service is scaling up intensive care beds.

NHS England is looking at critical care capacity across the NHS and the availability of additional facilities of independent sector providers.

NHS England is also making sure that there is access to as much ventilation equipment as possible and, crucially, the skilled and trained people to use it.

## ■ Incontinence

**Mr Stephen Morgan:** [\[25224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that continence products can be transported without interruption after the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

Prior to the United Kingdom leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020, the Department analysed the supply chains of 12,300 medicines, close to half a million product lines of medical devices and clinical consumables, vaccines used in national and local programmes, and essential non-clinical goods on which the health and care system relies.

The Department has continued to work closely with the devolved administrations, suppliers, the National Health Service and other key stakeholders to ensure our supply contingency plans for 31 December 2020 will cover the NHS, social care and the independent sector and covers all medicines, medical devices, supplies for clinical trials, vaccines and countermeasures, organs and tissues for transplants, and clinical consumables - including continence pads.

**Intensive Care: Doctors and Nurses****Jeremy Hunt:**[\[27551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many critical care trained (a) nurses and (b) doctors there were working in the NHS in (i) March 2020 and (ii) each of the last three years.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not hold the information requested.

**Measles: Disease Control****Chris Green:**[\[25127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the reinstatement of the UK's WHO measles-free status.

**Jo Churchill:**

As a first step toward the World Health Organization reinstating the United Kingdom's measles-free status, Public Health England (PHE) re-convened a multi-stakeholder measles and rubella elimination group, including NHS England, to develop a UK-wide strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to renew stakeholders' commitment to elimination and re-focus efforts to ensure this will be sustained in the medium- and long-term. A multi-agency implementation board is taking forward the actions of the strategy working with key national and local stakeholders.

NHS England and General Practitioners Committee England also agreed the introduction of a new measles, mumps and rubella catch-up programme for 10 and 11-year olds who have not received a completed course of vaccines via the routine immunisation programme.

**■ Medical Equipment**

**Jeremy Hunt:** [\[27553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) fluid repellent face masks, (b) general use aprons and (c) examination gloves the NHS stocked in (i) 2020 and (ii) in each of the last three years.

**Edward Argar:**

Information is not held centrally on the stock levels of products and supplies at individual National Health Service bodies.

**■ Mental Health Services: Pupils**

**Olivia Blake:** [\[27679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the average waiting time for school children seeking to access mental health services in Sheffield in each of the last five years.

**Edward Argar:**

We have not yet made such an assessment, as a national access and waiting times standard for children and young people's health services has not yet been defined.

We are piloting a new four-week waiting time for children and young people's mental health services in 12 areas and to inform the development of a new national access and waiting times standard.

**■ NHS: Public Lavatories**

**Jeremy Hunt:** [\[27552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of toilets available for use by patients throughout the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

National Health Service organisations make decisions locally on the provision of toilets to patients, visitors and staff. Data on them is not collected centrally.

**■ Patients: Visual Impairment**

**Helen Hayes:** [\[27558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 8395 on Visual Impairment, what plans his Department has to begin collecting data on patients' experiencing loss of sight while awaiting NHS treatment.

**Jo Churchill:**

There are no current plans to begin collecting data on patients' experiencing loss of sight while awaiting National Health Service treatment.

The current NHS access standard for referral to elective treatment requires that patients will be seen within a maximum waiting time of 18 weeks. Clinical priority is

the main determinant of when patients should be treated followed by the chronological order of when they were added to the list.

NHS England's Elective Care Transformation Programme is supporting hospital eye service departments to better manage demand and minimise the risk of significant harm to patients. Further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/transforming-elective-care-services-ophthalmology>

## ■ **Speech and Language Therapy: Recruitment**

**Geraint Davies:**

**[27481]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recent We are the NHS recruitment campaign, for what reasons speech and language therapists are not among the roles being recruited.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Health Service recruitment campaign 'We are the NHS', targets those allied health Professional roles in England, most in need based on the NHS Long Term Plan and interim NHS People Plan and those in hard to fill roles. It is for the devolved administrations in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland to decide on their recruitment needs and how they go about securing their workforce

The NHS People Plan, due to be published by the NHS in 2020, will set out a clear framework for growing and sustaining a well-skilled workforce across the whole NHS in England. At 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 nursing, midwifery and most allied health professions, including speech and language therapy, which will be available from September 2020 for new and continuing students at English universities. In addition, students with child dependents will benefit from an extra £1,000.

## ■ **Visual Impairment: Health Services**

**Helen Hayes:**

**[27559]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) availability and (b) average waiting times for NHS eyesight services.

**Jo Churchill:**

There is no evidence that patients looking to access National Health Service sight tests in primary care are facing delays. There were 13.2 million NHS sight tests carried out in 2018/19, an increase of 1.5% on the previous year.

The current NHS access standard for referral to elective treatment requires that patients will be seen within a maximum waiting time of 18 weeks. Clinical priority is

the main determinant of when patients should be treated followed by the chronological order of when they were added to the list.

There were 2 million first outpatients ophthalmology appointments, within NHS trusts in England or commissioned in England from the independent sector, during 2018/19 and of those, the average waiting time (mean), as reported by NHS Digital Hospital Episodes Statistics, was 51 days.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ EEA Nationals: Registration

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[26146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to process all EEA registration applicants within one month.

**Kevin Foster:**

Under the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2016, any application received from EEA citizens for residence documentation under those Regulations must be decided immediately upon application provided that application meets the relevant validity requirements.

### ■ Hate Crime: Sentencing

**Jim Shannon:** [\[24349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of sentences for people convicted of hate crime.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The legal framework for the prosecution of hate crimes in England and Wales includes provisions in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 to increase sentences where the offence is found to have been aggravated in relation to hostility on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity. For example, common assault (non-aggravated) carries a maximum sentence of 6 months imprisonment, whilst racially or religiously aggravated common assault carries a maximum two years imprisonment. These provisions are clearly highlighted in the relevant sentencing guidelines.

The Government has asked the Law Commission to undertake a review of the legislation related to hate crime, which will report in early 2021. The review is considering parity in the existing legislation and the case for additional characteristics to be protected by legislation. This includes reviewing the current range of specific offences and aggravating factors in sentencing.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Afzal Khan:**

**[27644]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the grant funding of up to £9 million her Department has made available to voluntary and community sector organisations to support vulnerable EU citizens apply for settled status, whether her Department has plans to extend the provision of that funding beyond the original term agreed; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

The EU Settlement Scheme was launched in March 2019 and gives EU citizens and their family members the status they need to live and work in the UK after 30 June 2021. There have already been more than 3.2 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme and nearly 2.9 million granted status, with over a year left to go.

There is a wide range of support available online, over the phone and in person to help them apply. This includes a helpline open 7 days a week where 250 staff based in Liverpool answer questions and help people apply. There are 1,500 Home Office staff working on the scheme in total.

Home visits and telephone support are available from a tutor for those lacking in digital skills or without internet access.

Last year, the Home Office awarded £9 million funding to 57 charities across the UK who have helped hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people already. The 57 charities currently funded by the Home Office will have their funding extended until the end of June 2020, to allow their work to continue during the bidding process for new funding.

On 6 March 2020, the Home Office announced a further £8 million of funding to help vulnerable EU citizens apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8-million-to-help-vulnerable-people-apply-to-the-eu-settlement-scheme>

Charities and local authorities will bid for further funding to provide face-to-face, online and telephone support to vulnerable people across the UK. This may include legal support, caseworker services or general advice as either individual or group sessions.

The further £8 million of funding for the 2020-2021 financial year will ensure important information continues to get through to those hardest to reach. As with all government funding, there will be a competitive bidding process to ensure the right support is provided to all parts of the UK and makes best use of public money.

Successful organisations will be fully supported by the Home Office and will be able to speak to caseworkers directly to discuss individual cases.

The bid process will begin shortly and more details will be announced in due course.

**■ Immigration: Northern Ireland****Gavin Robinson:** [\[27631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2020 to Question 3232, on Immigration: Northern Ireland, what the timeframe is for changing the immigration rules to allow the family members of people from Northern Ireland to apply for immigration status on broadly the same terms as family members of Irish citizens.

**Kevin Foster:**

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

**■ Police: Biometrics****Darren Jones:** [\[25723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of reports that police forces have conducted searches of Clearview AI's facial recognition database; and what assessment she has made of the legal basis for police forces to conduct such searches in the course of their investigations.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The use of suppliers and systems by the police to carry out a search of a database is a matter for the relevant police force, operating in accordance with the law.

**■ Public Sector: Trauma****Jess Phillips:** [\[25678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding the Government has allocated for the training of frontline public sector workers to provide trauma-informed support in the last three years.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office can confirm that there has been nil funding/budget or expenditure for the training of frontline public sector workers to provide trauma-informed support in the last three years.

Border Force has a Trauma Risk Management course that the HR Business Partners deliver to staff internally, as this is in house training there is no budget assigned for delivery.

As all training is internally delivered by staff members there are no costings or budgets assigned outside of salaried roles of staff members. Border Force currently have 239 staff members trained in this type of content and these are replenished by 40 staff members per year. Immigration Enforcement have 70 staff members trained. Border Force and Immigration Enforcement are deemed as frontline public sector workers.

Within Border Force during the last 12 months there were 107 incidents where this type of training was used.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Hate Crime: Crime Prevention

**Christian Wakeford:**

[\[25216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to tackle (a) antisemitism and (b) other hate crimes in (i) Bury South constituency and (ii) the UK.

**Luke Hall:**

All hatred including antisemitism, is completely unacceptable and has no place in our society, which is why we're taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms.

We recognise that there has been an increase in reported religiously motivated hate crime incidents across the country.

We are also aware that Greater Manchester had the highest number of antisemitic incidents outside Greater London over the last 10 years (2008-2018) according to the Community Security Trust, who are one of our key partners in tackling antisemitism and the main body reporting on the number of incidents each year.

That is why we became the first country in the world to adopt the working definition of antisemitism as set by the International Holocaust Remembrance

Alliance. We are making sure the police record hate crimes disaggregated by faith and our refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan reaffirms our commitment to combating antisemitism and our support for Jewish communities. We also are providing £14 million this year, and provided over £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings.

We have committed just over £1.5 million for projects to tackle racially and religiously motivated hatred from 2018 to 2020, and have just launched a new Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme to promote integration and tackle hate crime, including antisemitism. We have also committed £200,000 of Home Office funding for a new national police hub to tackle the emerging threat of online hate crime. The hub went live in January 2018.

### ■ Local Government: Coronavirus

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[27663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what contingency plans are in place to support local authorities in the recording of deaths in the event that covid-19 causes workforce disruptions.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government will continue to work with local partners, including local authorities and local resilience forums, to assist preparedness to manage the potential effects of

the Covid-19 outbreak. This includes supporting them in their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. All local partners have business continuity and local risk assessment processes in place for the purpose of ensuring that, if an emergency occurs, they are able to continue to perform their functions.

The Government will support councils to maintain their public services via the Covid-19 Response Fund, which has initially been set at £5 billion and provides funding so local public services are prepared and protected. Government is also considering emergency legislation which may ease some of the current requirements relating to registering a death.

### ■ Temporary Accommodation: Standards

**Fleur Anderson:**

[26958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect on people's mental health of being housed in temporary accommodation without cooking facilities; and what steps he is taking to improve the quality of temporary accommodation.

**Luke Hall:**

*[Holding answer 12 March 2020]:* The use of temporary accommodation means that people are getting help and it ensures no family is without a roof over their head.

Any accommodation secured by a local authority for a homeless household must meet the standards in the homelessness code of guidance, which sets out in detail what the authority must take into account when considering the accommodation's suitability. Housing authorities will need to consider carefully the suitability of accommodation where households have a medical and/or physical need.

Homeless households also have the right to request a review of the accommodation offered to them. This is covered in the code of guidance, along with the suitability standards which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation is a priority for this Government. We have allocated £437 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in 2020/21 – this is £69 million more than was allocated last year and includes £263 million for homelessness services which can be used flexibly as part of councils' resourcing to achieve their homelessness strategies.

### ■ Travellers: Caravan Sites

**Kate Green:**

[25094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance is issued to local authorities on the inclusion in local plans of accessibility for disabled residents of and visitors to Traveller sites.

**Luke Hall:**

No specific guidance is produced in relation to the accessibility of traveller sites, however the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that local planning policy and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Any permanent structures would also be subject to Part M of the Building Regulations, which require buildings to meet minimum accessibility standards.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Compressed Natural Gas: Exports**

**Hywel Williams:** [\[27503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the export potential for green compressed natural gas.

**Graham Stuart:**

No assessment has been undertaken by the Department for International Trade of the export potential for green compressed natural gas.

**■ Hydrogen: Exports**

**Hywel Williams:** [\[27502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the export potential for green hydrogen produced in the UK.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department for International Trade is engaging with UK suppliers from the hydrogen industry, sector specific research centres and trade associations to understand UK capability across low carbon hydrogen technologies, including green hydrogen production. The Department is also working with UK suppliers, foreign Governments and procuring authorities to identify potential export markets and opportunities.

**■ Quintessentially**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[25019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many visits has Quintessentially UK Limited (a) organised or (b) assisted as part of the Great Investors Programme.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department for International Trade has a contract with Quintessentially UK to support the attraction of international investment into the UK. Quintessentially UK provides: support with events and visits, advice on potential investors, introductions

for international investors to UK companies, investor engagement strategies, and assurances on the reputation of investors engaged.

The table attached details a breakdown of the visits, events, and support Quintessentially has provided through the Great Investors Programme.

**Attachments:**

1. Breakdown of visits, events & support [UIN 25019 - Table.docx]

## ■ Trade Agreements: Mexico

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[27604\]](#)

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

**Conor Burns:**

On 9 March 2020 the Government welcomed the Mexican Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Julián Ventura, to London for the ninth UK-Mexico High Level Economic Talks. I also personally met with Under-Secretary Ventura during his visit. These talks reviewed the implementation of the UK-Mexico Partnership for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, which includes our shared ambitions on trade. During the Talks, the UK and Mexico agreed a [joint statement](#) reiterating our shared commitment to seek to prevent disruption to preferential trade from the end of the Transition Period on 31 December, and to developing an ambitious future bilateral trading relationship.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Domestic Abuse: Sentencing

**Jess Phillips:** [\[25679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Government guidance on the Gov.UK website entitled, Ask for a Crown Court sentence to be reviewed, will be updated to include coercive control.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government keeps the GOV.UK website under constant review. Following the expansion of the Unduly Lenient Scheme in November, the attorney general office is currently updating the guidance available online relating to these measures to ensure it provides the public with the most useful information about the scheme.

**Jess Phillips:** [\[25680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme among victims of domestic violence.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government publishes information on the Unduly Lenient Scheme online on the GOV.UK website, but we are also exploring how to increase awareness of this scheme to victims of crime.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code) sets out a minimum standard of service and information that must be provided to victims of crime by the criminal justice system. We are currently consulting on a revised Code, which for the first time includes information for victims about the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme.

**Family Courts: Domestic Abuse****Jess Phillips:**[\[25674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to protect survivors of domestic abuse from further trauma in the family courts.

**Alex Chalk:**

Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime and we are determined to better protect and support the victims of abuse and their children, and bring perpetrators to justice.

In May 2019, we announced a public call for evidence led by a panel of experts to help us better understand victims' experiences of the system, and make sure the family court is never used to coerce or re-traumatise those who have been abused.

The panel are in the process of drafting their report and recommendations for next steps, which will be published in the Spring.

The Domestic Abuse Bill, reintroduced on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, also includes a provision to prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the family courts in England and Wales and the Government has agreed to widen the range of evidence which will trigger the automatic ban, in line with the legal aid regime.

**Prisons and Community Orders: Coronavirus****Kate Green:**[\[26946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce the risk of covid-19 spreading to (a) prison staff and people serving sentences in custody and (b) people serving sentences in the community and the staff who supervise them.

**Kate Green:**[\[26947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the provision of testing for covid-19 in prisons.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMPPS is working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, based on the very latest scientific and medical advice. We are working closely with Public Health England, the

NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care to manage the challenges we face.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, service users and visitors to our estate is paramount and at the heart of our approach.

Prisons and probation have existing, well-developed policies and procedures in place to manage outbreaks of infectious diseases. This means they are well prepared to take immediate action whenever cases or suspected cases are identified.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling the virus and good practice is being promoted on posters throughout the estate. Handwashing facilities are available to all prisoners, services users, staff and visitors, and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials.

We have procedures agreed with our public health colleagues for protecting staff in the workplace but, like any member of the community, some prison and probation staff may need to self-isolate in line with public health advice, or may become infected. We are taking steps to boost staff availability and so enable us to continue to look after prisoners properly and maintain supervision of offenders in the community in the event of staff absences.

#### ■ Prisons: Coronavirus

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[26881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment has he made of the vulnerability of the prison population to covid-19; and what steps he is taking to reduce the risk of the spread of that virus in that population.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMPPS is working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, based on the very latest scientific and medical advice. We are working closely with Public Health England, the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care to manage the challenges we face.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, prisoners and visitors is paramount and at the heart of our approach.

Prisons have existing, well-developed policies and procedures in place to manage outbreaks of infectious diseases. This means prisons are well prepared to take immediate action whenever cases or suspected cases are identified.

We are ensuring that where necessary, personal protective equipment is available to staff. In line with broader clinical advice, HMPPS has introduced a procedure for the protective isolation of individuals in prison custody when it is considered that they may be potentially infected with the virus. In Wales, we are working with prison health teams from local health boards to ensure we have a joint approach to any incidents.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling the virus and good practice is being promoted on posters throughout the estate. Handwashing facilities are available to all prisoners – not just in cells but other shared areas such as education blocks and kitchens. Staff

and visitors also have access to handwashing facilities and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials.

We have procedures agreed with our public health colleagues for protecting staff in the workplace but, like any member of the community, some prison staff may need to self-isolate in line with public health advice, or may become infected. We are taking steps to boost staff availability and so enable us to look after prisoners properly and minimise the impacts on prison regimes of staff absences.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[27028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to prevent the spread of covid-19 in prisons.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[27029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what additional resources he will allocate to prisons to ensure prisoners suspected of having covid-19 are able to attend outpatient appointments.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[27031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to covid-19, what steps he is taking to provide spaces for self-isolation throughout the prison estate.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[27032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to coronavirus, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of access to soap and cleaning materials in prisons.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMPPS is working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, based on the very latest scientific and medical advice. We are working closely with Public Health England, the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care to manage the challenges we face.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, prisoners and visitors is paramount and at the heart of our approach.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling the virus and good practice is being promoted on posters throughout the estate. Handwashing facilities are available to all prisoners – not just in cells but other shared areas such as education blocks and kitchens. Staff and visitors also have access to handwashing facilities and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials.

Prisons have existing, well-developed policies and procedures in place to manage outbreaks of infectious diseases. This means prisons are well prepared to take immediate action whenever cases or suspected cases are identified.

We are ensuring that where necessary, personal protective equipment is available to staff. In line with broader clinical advice, HMPPS has introduced a procedure for the protective isolation of individuals in prison custody when it is considered that they may be potentially infected with the virus.

Our capacity to isolate prisoners varies across the estate depending on the type of establishment, its configuration and the category of prisoner held. Each establishment has in place local contingency plans setting out how it will manage should isolation of prisoners be necessary.

People in prison custody who become unwell have the benefit of on-site NHS healthcare services which provide the first line assessment and treatment response. HMPPS has worked closely with our partners in the NHS to make arrangements for transfer to hospital should an individual be sufficiently unwell to require hospital admission, building on our business as usual procedures for access to healthcare.

We have procedures agreed with our public health colleagues for protecting staff in the workplace but, like any member of the community, some prison staff may need to self-isolate in line with public health advice, or may become infected. We are taking steps to boost staff availability and so enable us to look after prisoners properly and minimise the impacts on prison regimes of staff absences.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[27581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken since 31 January 2020 to prevent the spread of covid-19 in the (a) public and (b) private sector prison estate in England and Wales.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[27582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much additional funding has been allocated to the (a) Welsh Government and (b) other public bodies in Wales in response to the covid-19 outbreak to ensure additional health provisions in prisons in Wales, since 31 January 2020.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMPPS is working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, based on the very latest scientific and medical advice. We are working closely with Public Health England, Public Health Wales, Welsh Government, the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care to manage the challenges we face.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, prisoners and visitors is paramount and at the heart of our approach.

Prisons have existing, well-developed policies and procedures in place to manage outbreaks of infectious diseases. This means prisons are well prepared to take immediate action whenever cases or suspected cases are identified.

We are ensuring that where necessary, personal protective equipment is available to staff. In line with broader clinical advice, HMPPS has introduced a procedure for the protective isolation of individuals in prison custody when it is considered that they may be potentially infected with the virus. In Wales, we are working with prison health teams from local health boards to ensure we have a joint approach to any incidents.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling the virus and good practice is being promoted on posters throughout the estate. Handwashing facilities are available to all prisoners

– not just in cells but other shared areas such as education blocks and kitchens. Staff and visitors also have access to handwashing facilities and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials.

We have procedures agreed with our public health colleagues for protecting staff in the workplace but, like any member of the community, some prison staff may need to self-isolate in line with public health advice, or may become infected. We are taking steps to boost staff availability and so enable us to look after prisoners properly and minimise the impacts on prison regimes of staff absences.

Devolved administrations are a key part of COBR which is managing the cross-government response to Covid-19, but questions about funding of the Welsh Government and Public Bodies in Wales fall outside of our remit as the Ministry of Justice so we cannot provide an answer. Devolved funding is the responsibility of the HM Treasury.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Blue Badge Scheme

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[27516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that Blue Badges are made available to people with limited mobility who do not use wheelchairs.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Eligibility for the Blue Badge scheme is not condition-based so people with a disability or a condition which severely limits their physical mobility but who don't use a wheelchair could be issued a badge if they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

The Department has published clear and concise non-statutory guidance to local authorities in England on how to administer the scheme, and similar guidance is provided by the Devolved Administrations to their issuing authorities.

### ■ Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[27504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the progress that will be made by the end of the 2019 Parliament on the ambitions set out in the Government's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy set out ambitious plans to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys. In 2018, people cycled an estimated total of 1,006 million stages, an increase of 22% since the 2013 baseline. The 2025 aim for walking stages has already been exceeded, with people walking an average of 347 stages per year in 2018. Further details were set out in the Report to Parliament, published on 7 February and available on gov.uk.

The Department has now received 39 draft Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) from local authorities, which will set the context for future scheme investment.

### ■ Disruptive Airline Passengers Working Group

**Paul Maynard:** [\[25060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Disruptive Passengers Working Group last met; and if he will publish the minutes of that meeting.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government continues to work in collaboration with the Civil Aviation Authority, airports and airlines to consider measures needed to tackle the problem of disruptive passenger behaviour in aviation. The last cross-industry meeting with representatives from the Government, the Civil Aviation Authority, airlines, airports, the retail sector and the police was held on 8 May 2019. As this was organised by the Civil Aviation Authority, the Government holds no official minutes of this meeting.

### ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

**Tracey Crouch:** [\[26842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of electric vehicle charging points in (a) Chatham and Aylesford constituency, (b) Medway and (c) Kent.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The figures requested are in the attached table. Figures are accurate as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

**Attachments:**

1. No of electric charging points in Chatham and Kent [No of electric charging points in Chatham and Medway.docx]

### ■ Heathrow Airport Holdings: Carbon Emissions

**Alex Sobel:** [\[26172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage Heathrow Airport Holdings to reduce its carbon emissions.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 26 February 2020, to Question [18648](#).

### ■ Luton Station: Finance

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[25218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding has been allocated to improve Luton railway station; and how that funding compares to investment in railway stations in the (a) East of England and (b) UK.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department does not hold information on spending on stations in the East of England. Luton station is due to benefit from a share of the £300million Access for All funding. Subject to a feasible design being identified, the station will receive a step free route from the station entrance, to and between all platforms. Luton station has been in the Access for All programme for a number of years, but Network Rail (NR) have been unable to secure Luton Borough Council (LBC) approval for any of their proposed designs.

Furthermore, as part of GTR's May 2018 Passenger Benefit Fund, Luton was allocated £80,000. Following the passenger consultation last year, toilet refurbishments have been approved at this station. I look forward to meeting with my honourable Friend later this month to discuss this issue further.

**Members: Correspondence****Rachel Hopkins:**[\[25749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Luton South dated 11 February 2020 on investment in Luton Railway Station.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Secretary of State has asked me in my capacity as Rail Minister to meet with the hon. Member to discuss this investment.

My Private Office has contacted the Member for Luton South's office and has arranged a mutually convenient date for us to meet to discuss this issue.

**Motor Vehicles: Compressed Natural Gas****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[27569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2020 to Question 25169, what steps his Department have taken to encourage the uptake of compressed natural gas vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The £20m Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial (LEFT) has supported 61 zero and low emission heavy goods vehicles into operation on UK roads, including some using compressed natural gas (CNG) as an alternative to diesel.

Emissions testing is a key aspect of project evaluation that will ensure we have a clear and independent view on the environmental impact of these vehicles. The programme is on-going with the final report expected to be published by the summer.

In the 2018 Budget, the Government confirmed that it would maintain the difference between alternative fuel (including CNG) and main road fuel duty rates until 2032 (subject to a review in 2024) to support the decarbonisation of the UK transport sector.

**■ Trains: Hydrogen****Jonathan Edwards:** [\[27570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2020 to Question 25168, what discussions he has had with his Welsh counterparts on hydrogen-powered trains on Welsh railways.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The DfT is working with Network Rail and the rail industry to determine which parts of the network are best suited to use of hydrogen trains, as well as battery and electrification. DfT is also supporting the development of hydrogen technology through innovation funding and research to overcome barriers to its deployment. This work supports deployment of hydrogen technology across the GB railway.

I have not had conversations with my Welsh colleagues on this subject.

**TREASURY****■ Business: Coronavirus****Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:** [\[25706\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce measures in the upcoming budget to help businesses manage the potential effect on the economy of the spread of covid-19.

**Steve Barclay:**

Public safety is the government's top priority in our response to Covid-19.

The UK is well prepared and the government is taking firm and comprehensive action, consistent with the best scientific evidence, to contain, delay, mitigate, and research the virus.

At Budget, the Chancellor outlined how the government will be supporting public services, individuals, and businesses. These include a range of measures that are timely, targeted, and temporary, so that they deliver support when and where it is needed, while protecting long-term fiscal sustainability.

**■ Coronavirus: South Yorkshire****Dan Jarvis:** [\[R\] \[27610\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial steps he is taking to ensure the resilience of the South Yorkshire economy in the event of an outbreak of covid-19.

**John Glen:**

At Budget 2020 the Chancellor set out a £12 billion package of timely, temporary and targeted measures to support public services, individuals and businesses experiencing economic disruption because of COVID-19. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19>

## ■ Incontinence

**Louise Haigh:** [\[27614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has plans to extend tax exemptions for sanitary products to incontinence products.

**Jesse Norman:**

As announced in the Budget, women's sanitary products are to be zero rated for VAT from 1 January 2021, meaning no VAT will be charged on their purchase.

Incontinence products can already be zero rated for VAT, if for example they are purchased for personal use by a person who is incontinent, or by any charity that makes the products available to incontinent people.

## ■ Public Sector Debt

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[27505\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the level of public sector net debt by March 2022.

**Steve Barclay:**

The government's medium-term economic and fiscal forecasts are produced by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

The most recent Budget forecast was published on 11 March 2020. In this publication, the OBR's forecast for the level of public sector net debt is £1827 billion in 2021-22, which is 75.0% as a share of GDP.

On 13 March 2020, the OBR are due to publish a supplementary forecast.

## ■ Whisky: Scotland

**Sir Peter Bottomley:** [\[24998\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the value to the economy of the Scottish whisky industry in each of the last five years.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the important role of the Scottish whisky industry in Scotland, and in the UK economy.

At Budget 2020 the Chancellor announced a freeze on spirits duty, and a range of other measures to support the industry, including an additional £1m to promote Scottish food and drink products overseas.

## ■ Wines

**Sir Peter Bottomley:** [\[24997\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the value to the economy of the British wine and sparkling wine industry in each of the last five years.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the important role that wine, and the wine industry, plays in our economy and society. At Budget 2020 the Chancellor announced a freeze on wine duty, making the price of a bottle of wine 5p lower than it would have been had prices risen with inflation.

**WORK AND PENSIONS**■ **Children: Maintenance**

**Caroline Nokes:** [\[26916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of allocating named caseworkers to complex cases undertaken by the Child Maintenance Service.

**Mims Davies:**

Child Maintenance Service caseworkers deliver a broad range of services' across business lines, covering applications, case maintenance, arrears and enforcement. Child Maintenance Service caseworkers receive the skills to provide a service to customers in their specific line. In addition, the service also provides complex caseworkers, who can provide additional expert knowledge in that line. Flexing this resource, as and when complex matters arise, maximises the value they can add to delivering successful client outcomes.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Disability**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[27006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the reasons why her Department has lost more employment tribunals for disability discrimination than any other employer since 2016; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[27012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of trends in the level of cases lost by her Department in relation to employment tribunals for disability discrimination on objective 2 of her Department's single departmental plan.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[27014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on her Department's reputation of the level of cases of employment tribunals for disability discrimination that her Department has lost since 2016.

**Mims Davies:**

We have committed to undertaking a review and will not be pre-judging the outcome of that review.

## ■ Independent Case Examiner

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[25695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the average time taken for claimants to receive a decision from the Independent Case Examiner.

**Mims Davies:**

The table below provides details of the average time taken for complainants to receive a decision from the Independent Case Examiner's (ICE) Office, in the current reporting year (April 2019 to February 2020).

When the ICE Office accepts a complaint for investigation, it will consider whether it can be resolved by brokering a solution between the complainant and the relevant department or supplier, without having to request evidence to inform an investigation. If the complaint can't be resolved, the evidence will be requested and the case will await allocation to an Investigation Case Manager (ICM). Cases are dealt with by dedicated teams and are usually brought into investigation in strict date order.

Following an investigation of the evidence the complaint may be settled, if agreement can be reached on actions that satisfy the complainant. If the complaint cannot be settled, the Independent Case Examiner will issue a report detailing findings and any recommendations for redress.

The cases that reach the Independent Case Examiner are the most complex and investigations will not be compromised in order to be completed within certain timescales. We keep people updated about the timings involved with their case and the vast majority of complainants are satisfied with the service they receive.

DESCRIPTION	AVERAGE TIME IN WEEKS
Resolution (from acceptance to case closure)	6 weeks (against a target of 8 weeks)
Time taken to allocate case to ICM (from date of acceptance)	59 weeks
Settlement (from allocation to ICM to case closure)	8 weeks (against a target of 15 weeks)
ICE Report (from allocation to ICM to case closure)	23.5 weeks (against a target of 20 weeks)

## ■ Pension Credit

**Jo Stevens:**

[\[27560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people aged 75 and over were in receipt of pension credit in each year from 2015 to 2019.

**Guy Opperman:**

It is important to highlight that in 2017/18 there were around 1.7 million Pension Credit claimants, receiving around £5.1 billion of Pension Credit payments.

The Government wants to make sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are entitled. That is why on the 10 February we launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit. The aim of the campaign is to encourage those over State Pension age to check whether they're eligible. We want to make it clear that having savings, a pension or owning a home are not automatic barriers to receiving Pension Credit; as well as explaining that even a small award of Pension Credit can provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with rent, council tax reduction schemes and heating costs.

The campaign includes a short, animated video that is being shown in GP waiting rooms and in Post Offices. It is also being shown to Facebook users over State Pension age and supported by other messaging on social media. We have also made the video and campaign materials available for stakeholders to use, as we know they are often one of the first places people turn to for information about Pension Credit.

An important part of our overall strategy to promote take-up is engaging with people who may be eligible to benefits at pivotal stages, such as when they claim State Pension or Attendance Allowance or report a change in their circumstances which may mean that they could be eligible for Pension Credit.

Pension Credit is an income-related benefit, which means that entitlement to the benefit will depend on an individual's particular circumstances. It is therefore not possible to identify each person that is eligible, which is why we are encouraging people who think they may be eligible for Pension Credit to use the online Pension Credit calculator <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator> to check if they are likely to be eligible and get an estimate of what they may receive.

Information on the number of Pension Credit claimants aged 75 and over between the years of 2015 and 2019 is shown below.

YEAR	NUMBER OF PENSION CREDIT CLAIMANTS
2019	926,494
2018	951,529
2017	993,031
2016	1,033,380
2015	1,102,497

Note: Pension Credit is paid per household rather than per person like other benefits, therefore a Pension Credit Claimant can represent more than one person in receipt of Pension Credit. These figures represent the number of claimants as at August each

year and represents those households where the main claimant is aged 75 and over and receiving payment.

The information is published and available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

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

## ■ Poverty

**Paul Maynard:**

[26837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people were in persistent poverty in each of the last five years.

**Will Quince:**

Statistics on persistent low income are published annually in the "Income Dynamics" publication. This data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-dynamics-2016-to-2017>, in the 'persistent low income trends' file in Table 1.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Kate Osborne:**

[27071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what comparative assessment her Department has made of the transport costs for universal credit claimants throughout the regions of the UK.

**Will Quince:**

Since the introduction of Universal Credit, claimants have been supported by a more flexible approach to contact, with much greater use of digital and telephone channels. This enables claimants to continue to engage with the Department, receive appropriate support and satisfy the conditions of their personalised Claimant Commitment without having to always attend an appointment in person.

To assist with the affordability of public transport, and where an appointment at a Jobcentre has been agreed as necessary, Work Coaches are able to consider the reimbursement of a claimant's travel costs. The Department publishes clear guidance to its staff of when mandatory awards for travel must be made from the Flexible Support Fund.

Concessionary travel legislation gives local authorities in England the power to offer discretionary concessions, such as extending free or discounted bus travel to groups of people such as those on Universal Credit. Local authorities decide to offer these concessions based upon their assessment of local needs and funding priorities, paying for them through local resources like Council Tax.

In addition, the rail industry, together with the Department for Work and Pensions, provides the Jobcentre Plus railcard that entitles card holders to a 50% discount on selected rail tickets. Some train operating companies and Jobcentres have also agreed to offer job seekers additional benefits, such as free rail tickets to job interviews.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Electoral Register: Digital Technology

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[22431]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has used the powers under section 52(1A) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 to require local authorities to keep electoral registers in a standardised digital format.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 March 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government has not issued a ministerial direction to require local authorities to keep electoral registers in a standardised digital format. However, the issue of a common standard for electoral register data has been discussed previously at meetings of **between** the Parliamentary Parties Panel **and Cabinet Office officials**.

This Panel is run by the Electoral Commission and gives representatives of the main political parties a forum to discuss issues affecting them. More information can be found at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are/how-we-make-decisions/party-panels>

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ 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.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 March 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Victoria Prentis:**

**Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities are primarily funded from local authorities under powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. In recognition that IFCAs were carrying out new functions, Defra has been providing them with £3million per year in New Burdens funding since their creation. The future of this funding will be considered alongside departmental budgetary requirements in the forthcoming Spending Review. Future funding arrangements for Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will be considered alongside departmental budgetary requirements in the forthcoming Spending Review.**

## ■ Trees

**Chris Grayling:**

[\[25632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of trees growing in England in each of the last three decades.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 March 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Forestry Commission produces statistics annually on woodland area in England but not by tree numbers. These are Official Statistics produced to meet the standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics. Woodland area statistics can be found on the Forest Research web site together with background information at

<https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/>

The below figures are reported in Forestry Statistics and use data from the National Forest Inventory:

Year at 31 March | Thousand **Hectares** ~~acres~~

---

1989	1,201
1994	1,224
1999	1,246
2004	1,272
2009	1,288
2014	1,302
2019	1,308

Source: Forestry Statistics 2019

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Heathrow Airport: Construction

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[26174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that funding from the public purse for Heathrow airport expansion is allocated in line with the recent judgment on that expansion.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 11 March 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The sale of nut-based products on board aircrafts is a commercial decision for individual airlines. However, the Government is pleased to note that a number of UK airlines have taken positive steps to ban nuts and nut products from their aircraft. We continue to encourage industry to take appropriate measures. Government also wants to see improved clarity and consistency in how airlines operating in the UK assist nut allergy sufferers.

**We have always been clear that Heathrow expansion is a private sector project which must meet strict criteria on air quality, noise and climate change, as well as being privately financed, affordable, and delivered in the best interest of consumers. It will receive no public funds.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

## DEFENCE

■ **Baseline Profit Rate 2020-21 for Single Source Defence Contracts**

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

[\[HCWS157\]](#)

I am today announcing that I have set the baseline profit rate for single source defence contracts at 8.22%, in line with the rate recommended by the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO). The baseline profit rate is calculated on a three year rolling average of underlying profit rates. The underlying profit rate decreased from 8.50% for 2019-20 to 8.23% for 2020-21. I have accepted the methodology used by the SSRO to calculate these figures.

I am also announcing new Capital Servicing Rates and an SSRO funding adjustment as recommended by the SSRO, which can be found at Table 1 below. These rates have been published in the London Gazette, as required by the Defence Reform Act 2014.

All of these new rates will come into effect from 1 April 2020.

**Table 1: Recommended Rates agreed by the Secretary of State for Defence**

ELEMENT	2019 RATES	2020 RATES
Baseline Profit Rate (BPR) (% on contract cost)	<b>7.63%</b>	<b>8.22%</b>
Fixed Capital Servicing Rate (% on Fixed Capital employed)	<b>3.98%</b>	<b>3.66%</b>
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on positive Working Capital employed)	<b>1.18%</b>	<b>1.22%</b>
Working Capital Servicing Rate (% on negative Working Capital employed)	<b>0.53%</b>	<b>0.61%</b>
SSRO Funding Adjustment	<b>-0.042%</b>	<b>-0.052%</b>

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Delivery restrictions**

**Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):**

[\[HCWS159\]](#)

I wish to update the House on the urgent matter of enabling retailers of food, sanitary and other essential items to increase the frequency of deliveries to their stores to support the response to Covid-19.

Many supermarkets, food retailers and distribution centres in England are subject to controls which restrict the time and number of deliveries from lorries and other delivery vehicles, particularly at night. These include planning conditions, which are necessary to making the development acceptable to local residents who might otherwise suffer from traffic, noise and other local amenity issues as a result of these deliveries.

Given the exceptional challenges facing the UK from the coronavirus however, it is vital that deliveries of food, sanitary and other essential products over the coming weeks can be made as quickly and safely as possible, minimising disruption to the supply chains on which our communities depend. The likely pressures on driver capacity mean additional flexibility is needed so that retailers can accept deliveries throughout the day and night where necessary.

The National Planning Policy Framework already emphasises that planning enforcement is a discretionary activity, and local planning authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control.

The purpose of this Written Ministerial Statement, which comes into effect immediately, is to make clear that as a matter of urgency local planning authorities should take a positive approach to their engagement with food retailers and distributors, as well as the freight industry, to ensure planning controls are not a barrier to food delivery over the period of disruption caused by the coronavirus.

Given the current situation local planning authorities should not seek to undertake planning enforcement action which would result in unnecessarily restricting deliveries of food and other essential deliveries during this period, having regard to their legal obligations.

The Government recognises that the increased frequency of deliveries, particularly at night, could have a temporary impact on local residents. However, this needs to be balanced by the significant public interest in ensuring local residents have continued access to food, sanitary and other essential goods in their local shops. The retail and logistics sectors have also worked to minimise impacts on residents over recent years through Quiet Deliveries and the Government expects that such good practice continues. The Government will review the need for the flexibility outlined in this statement after the pressure from the coronavirus has reduced, and it is the intention to withdraw it once the immediate urgency has subsided.

This Written Ministerial Statement only covers England. We are working closely with the devolved administrations to consider similar arrangements.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Contingencies Fund Advance

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**

[\[HCWS158\]](#)

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,500,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department for Work and Pensions. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £1,500,000,000 will be met by a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund.

This is not a request for additional funding but is to meet the Department's cash requirements pending Royal Assent of the Supplementary Estimate 2019-20 and will enable the Department to continue to deliver an effective welfare system for our citizens.