



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 September 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:39 P.M., 23 September 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Artificial Intelligence: Competition and Consumers

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[49136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with the (a) Equality and Human Rights Commission and (b) Information Commissioner's Office on the publications of the CMA's report, Algorithms: How they can reduce competitions and harm consumers, published in January 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department is in regular communication with the Information Commissioner's Office and other interested parties on matters relating to competition. We are currently consulting on the design of a new digital competition regime including new powers for the CMA to tackle problems in digital markets. BEIS is working with DCMS, ICO and others to ensure coherence across the work of different regulators.

The CMA is independent from Government and so BEIS did not contribute to the specific report on 'Algorithms: How they can reduce competitions and harm consumers'.

#### ■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[50178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many companies that availed of bounce back loans have (a) filed for bankruptcy and (b) indicated that they will not be in a position to repay their loans.

**Paul Scully:**

Data on the number of companies with a Bounce Back Loan that have entered formal insolvency procedures will be collected in due course.

It is too early to provide figures relating to repayments given many businesses have yet to begin repaying their Bounce Back Loan. Further information related to loan repayments for the Government's Covid-19 loan schemes will feature in the BEIS 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts, scheduled for publication later this year.

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[51778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of people who will be repaying (a) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and (b) Bounce Back Loan Scheme debt during retirement.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government's Covid-19 loan schemes have provided a lifeline to millions of businesses across the UK – helping them survive the pandemic and protecting millions of jobs. As of 31 May 2021, over £26 billion has been lent through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme, and over £47 billion has been lent through the Bounce Back Loan scheme, for a total of nearly £74 billion.

Age is classed as personal data which is not held by the British Business Bank. Where loans have been taken out by companies, it is those companies that are responsible and any liability remains with the company entity, not individuals.

**Business: Subsidies****John Penrose:**[\[49082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the total value of reported Government subsidies to businesses as at 14 September 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

According to the most recent available State Aid Scoreboard, the total reported subsidies between 2010 and 2019 in the United Kingdom was €80.1bn for non-agricultural subsidies. Data covering 2020 will be included in the next annual report of the State Aid Scoreboard.

Data for the period from 01 January 2021 is held on the UK's publicly-accessible subsidy Transparency Database.

**Carbon Capture and Storage****Alan Brown:**[\[51750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will list the (a) value, (b) date of award, (c) proposed outcome and (d) spend profile for each funding allocation to a carbon capture and storage cluster.

**Greg Hands:**

Details of these awards are publicly available, including both the size of the awards and the nature of the projects we are supporting:

<https://www.ukri.org/news/ukri-awards-171m-in-uk-decarbonisation-to-nine-projects/>.

**Coronavirus: Vaccination****Michael Fabricant:**[\[50943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to acquire vaccines to provide protection from the most recent variants of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

**George Freeman:**

We are planning for all scenarios in the fight against COVID-19 and the Vaccine Taskforce is taking a number of steps to ensure the UK is prepared to respond to current and emerging COVID-19 variants as quickly as possible.

However, current data suggests that all deployed COVID-19 vaccines in the UK - AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna - offer protection against the prevalent virus variants currently circulating in the UK, and recent data indicates that the Pfizer vaccine remains effective against Beta variant.

We continue to assess the efficacy of the vaccines currently in our portfolio against new and future variants of the virus and continue to work closely with vaccine manufacturers to ensure that vaccines that have already received UK regulatory approval could be suitably updated, where possible and where needed, to remain effective against emerging variants of SARS-CoV-2.

**■ Courier Services: Fees and Charges**

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[51689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45119 on Courier Services: Fees and Charges, what evidence he has that (a) disbursement charges paid by the customer to delivery companies that are paying import taxes are agreed with retailers and (b) disbursement charges are included in international retailers pricing information; and what steps he is taking to help ensure that international retailers are subject to UK consumer legislation.

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[51692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 September 2021 to Question 38259 on Taxation: Import Duties, what recent assessment he has made of the range and prevalence of disbursement charges by delivery companies paying import duties liable on imported purchases; and what steps the Government is taking to support consumer choice in paying those charges.

**Paul Scully:**

Where international traders trade in or target their activities at the UK, they are generally subject to UK consumer protection law and consumers are able to rely on a strong set of consumer rights. The UK Government does not hold information on the commercial arrangements of international couriers or international retailers. The Government is seeking to enhance global cooperation on consumer protection, through our trade policy and the Competition and Markets Authority's work in international fora.

**■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Flags**

**Justin Madders:** [\[50051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.



**George Freeman:**

Since 2019 all Union Jack flags purchased by the Department have been supplied by the Hampshire Flag Company.

**Justin Madders:**[\[50052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of Union Jack flags purchased by his Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

**George Freeman:**

The Department purchased six Union Jack flags in 2020 and one Union Jack flag in 2021. Three of these were for display on a pole and four for table settings.

The flags were purchased from the Hampshire Flag Company, which manufactures at its site in Waterlooville, Hampshire.

All flags purchased in the past two years have therefore been manufactured in the UK.

**■ Employment****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[49997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people in paid employment as at 15 September 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

For the three months to July 2021, the number of employees was estimated at 27.9 million, with 32.4 million in employment (including self-employed).

Early estimates from HMRC real time payroll data for August showed that the number of payroll employees was 29.1 million, returning to pre-pandemic level.

**■ Energy Supply: Prices****Chi Onwurah:**[\[51691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his oral statement of 20 September 2021 on UK Gas Market, which energy companies were present at the meeting he held with energy companies on the impact of wholesale energy price rises; how many of those companies were small energy companies; and what steps he is taking to support small energy companies to manage the impact of wholesale energy price rises.

**Greg Hands:**

On 20 September 2021 a roundtable was held with leading energy suppliers and consumer groups to hear about the challenges they currently face, and on 21 September a roundtable was held with smaller and challenger energy suppliers.

The Government wants to see a diverse energy market with many smaller and challenger energy suppliers bringing an improvement to customers. The biggest

danger to a diverse market is the threat of renationalisation which would raise prices and damage investment.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[51789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that low income households are able to heat their homes following recent rises in energy prices.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is committed to ensuring fair energy prices for consumers. That is why Government introduced the energy price cap in 2019, which saves 15 million households on default tariffs up to £100 a year on average.

The Government's Warm Home Discount provides over 2 million eligible households with £140 off their bills. In addition, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments will help ensure those most vulnerable are better able to heat their homes over the colder months.

#### ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**John Spellar:** [\[51590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the shortfall from energy companies in paying for the insulating homes programme as at 20 September 2021.

**Greg Hands:**

The Energy Company Obligation applies to energy suppliers with domestic customer accounts exceeding 150,000.

We expect the very large majority of the overall obligation to be met, with some suppliers potentially exceeding their targets by 31 March 2022.

#### ■ Green: Prices

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[51690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Green Energy Company on the impact of wholesale energy prices on its (a) consumers and (b) employees; and what financial support he plans to offer to that company.

**Greg Hands:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I held a roundtable on 21 September 2021 with smaller and challenger energy suppliers, including Green Energy Company.

In the coming days, the Government will set out the next steps for protecting consumers, businesses and energy suppliers from these global price rises.

## ■ Help to Grow Scheme

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[49124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the value for money for the taxpayer in the Help To Grow Digital programme; and what steps he has taken to help ensure that the suppliers of the technology selected are offering the best value for money.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department has assessed the benefits of SMEs increased adoption of technology, including evidence set out in the HMG Business Productivity Review, that strongly suggests that the productivity gains of technology adoption are likely to be significant. As such, I believe the scheme will provide a high degree of value for money and we will carry out robust monitoring and evaluation work to ensure this.

Software vendors need to apply to be approved onto the Help to Grow Scheme, which includes eligibility criteria designed to ensure that SMEs benefit from high-quality products. Approved vendors will need to provide SMEs with a clear pricing structure that is consistent between their advertised price and Help to Grow: Digital price and will need offer the same level of discounts or trial period and other incentives to SMEs as advertised to its other customers.

## ■ Made Smarter: North East

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[49135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to maximise the awareness of the Made Smarter Adoption North East scheme among SMEs in the manufacturing sector; and what progress he has made on establishing the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of that scheme.

**Lee Rowley:**

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership and Tees Valley Combined Authority are jointly working to promote the scheme via local press, social media, e-newsletters, their websites, and targeted campaigns. The Made Smarter Adoption model is being independently evaluated through the Made Smarter North West Pilot, which ran from 2019 to 2021.

## ■ Migrant Workers: Visas

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[50009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the introduction of temporary visas for low skilled workers to supply sectors reporting labour shortages.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has regular discussions with my Rt. Hon. Friend the Home Secretary on a range of issues, including making sure businesses have appropriate access to talent

from across the world so that we can build back better from the pandemic and support the national economic recovery.

We have taken action on this issue. We have expanded the Seasonal Workers Pilot to 30,000 visas for workers to come to the UK for up to six months; and have introduced measures to help tackle the HGV driver shortage.

We want to see employers make long term investments in the UK domestic workforce and make employment more attractive through offering training, careers options and wage increases.

We continue to work closely with industry to address sector challenges and our Plan for Jobs is helping people across the country retrain, build new skills and get back into work.

### ■ **Minimum Wage: Children and Young People**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[50024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to ensure that all under-18 workers are entitled to the National Minimum Wage.

**Paul Scully:**

The National Minimum Wage is the legal minimum hourly rate of pay for workers over the compulsory school age, generally 16 years of age. Individuals cannot work full-time until they have reached school leaving age. Children are also thoroughly protected by other relevant regulations concerning child employment. We therefore have no plans to change eligibility for the National Minimum Wage.

### ■ **New Businesses: West Yorkshire**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[49217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to encourage entrepreneurs to set up new businesses in (a) Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) West Yorkshire.

**Paul Scully:**

A wide range of support and funding is available in Morley and Outwood and across West Yorkshire for businesses at all stages, from start-ups and early-stage companies to established businesses that are ready to expand and grow.

With BEIS funding support, the Leeds City Region Growth Hub provides a single point of access to a wide range of national and local support and funding, delivering impartial advice and support to businesses of all sizes and stages of growth. The Growth Hub can signpost the most effective support to individual businesses and entrepreneurs, including the following key products.

The Start Up Loans Company, part of the Government-owned British Business Bank, provides loans and pre- and post-application support to new entrepreneurs, including a year of free business mentoring for successful applicants. Since the Start Up Loans

programme was launched in 2012, 123 loans have been delivered worth over £1.2m in Morley and Outwood, while across West Yorkshire 2,784 loans have been delivered worth £25.9m.

Business support in Morley and Outwood and across West Yorkshire also includes the Business Growth Programme, which comprises capital investment grants for businesses focussed on productivity, innovation, digital, resource efficiency and new start enterprises. Supported by £7m from Government's Getting Building Fund, it is available to existing businesses and inward investors.

The Ad:Venture programme is a dedicated business start-up programme, with young West Yorkshire businesses benefitting from a tailored mix of practical advice, coaching, academic support, incubation work space, finance brokerage and low rate loans. To July 2021, 258 businesses in Leeds and 54 in Wakefield have benefitted from the programme, with £2.3m grant awarded to 471 businesses across West Yorkshire.

This support will be enhanced by an Entrepreneurship Support Package as part of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan, with boosting support for entrepreneurship across West Yorkshire a key priority. This package will use at least £6m of investment funds provided by Government through the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal and is focused on helping individuals in the region to explore and establish new businesses, including a £1m Business Start-Up Programme to assist with financial planning, business structure and tax, sales and marketing, access to finance and recruiting staff.

## ■ Procurement: China

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

[\[51738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many British companies have approached his Department seeking advice on supply chains in China following publication of the G7 Trade Ministers' Communique on 28 May 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government regularly engages with British companies on supply chain matters, including in China. We recommend that British businesses operating in China should make use of the Overseas Business Risk guidance that is published online. That guidance is regularly updated, with the guidance for China being most recently updated in August 2021.

## ■ Renewables Obligation

**John Spellar:**

[\[51589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the amount of money that is outstanding from energy companies for renewable obligation certificates as at 20 September 2021.

**Greg Hands:**

Ofgem, the administrators of the Renewables Obligation scheme, are monitoring the amount of money outstanding from electricity suppliers and are actively engaging with suppliers who are due to make payments.

■ **Wind Power: Seas and Oceans**

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[51626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing the Government's 2030 floating wind deployment target.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[51627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a 2040 target for floating wind deployment.

**Greg Hands:**

A Government priority is the growth of offshore wind to 2030 and beyond. The Government is committed to supporting the development of floating offshore wind, as reflected in our ambitious target of 1GW of floating wind by 2030.

Floating offshore wind projects will be eligible to bid in the next Contract for Difference allocation round, which will open in December 2021. The Government recently announced a minimum allocation for floating offshore wind in this round. This approach will provide the foundation for investment in a sustainable, competitive UK based supply chain.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Civil Service: Location**

**Peter Gibson:** [\[903620\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to deliver civil service jobs outside London.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Government is committed to levelling-up through relocating high quality Civil Service Jobs. At Budget 2020 we set out our ambitions to relocate 22,000 roles out of London by 2030, bringing new jobs and investment to all nations and parts of the UK, with senior roles being created in areas such as Glasgow, Belfast, Cardiff, Darlington and Wolverhampton. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster during his time as Chief Secretary to the Treasury encouraged Departments to frontload the majority of moves over this next Spending Review. I can confirm that we now have early commitments to move up to 15,000 civil service roles by 2024/25.

Departments will decide on their locations taking into account a range of factors including skills, transport links and capacity to meet their needs and flourish in their

chosen locations, as well as ensuring locations are suitable for the long term success and sustainability of the civil service.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Public Inquiries**

**Ian Byrne:**

[903619]

If he will take steps to consult bereaved families on the public inquiry into the Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Michael Ellis:**

Every death from this virus is a tragedy and our deepest sympathies are with everyone who has lost loved ones. The Government remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that these families secure the opportunity to scrutinise the Government's response to managing the pandemic that they deserve.

The Prime Minister made clear in his statement to this House on 12 May that bereaved families and others will be consulted on the inquiry's terms of reference before they are finalised.

## ■ **United Kingdom**

**Dr Jamie Wallis:**

[903624]

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on strengthening the Union.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Government is committed to protecting and promoting the combined strengths of our Union, the most successful political and economic union in history. It is vital that we continue to work together across the UK on our common challenges including recovering from Covid-19 and supporting the NHS.

My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities, is now the Minister responsible for the Union portfolio.

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

### ■ **Clergy: Suicide**

**Chris Loder:**

[R] [51846]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, how many clergy have taken their own lives in the last five years.

**Andrew Selous:**

Records are not held centrally on the causes of death of clergy. The Church of England provides resources for those experiencing stress and signposts to other resources from charities and organisations able to help. Some more information is available here: [Supporting clergy health and wellbeing | The Church of England](#) As chief pastors in their dioceses, diocesan bishops ensure pastoral care is available to clergy and is provided when needed. The Church of England is committed to

supporting those individuals and organisations working to help those at risk of self-harm and suicide. At a parish level many clergy play a key role themselves in providing counselling, comfort and support to those at risk. All suicides are tragedies, and whilst causes will vary, the death of any member of the clergy through suicide will be a matter of profound concern and deep sadness for all in the church, their community and all who have a responsibility for their pastoral care.

## COP26

### ■ COP26: Written Questions

**Carol Monaghan:** [\[51735\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, when he plans to respond to Questions 45188, 45189, and 45190 tabled on 8 September 2021 by the hon. Member for Glasgow North West on business compensation during COP26.

**Alok Sharma:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Questions [45188](#), [45189](#), and [45190](#).

## DEFENCE

### ■ Afghanistan: Asylum

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[51755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will enable armed forces personnel to lead the humanitarian effort supporting Afghan refugees being accommodated in bridging hotels under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that those Afghan nationals who were relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and during the recent evacuation are well supported as they start their new lives in the UK. The Home Office is the lead government department for Afghan resettlement and is working with charities and third sector organisations to deliver support in bridging accommodation. Defence is engaged with the Home Office to identify where it would be appropriate to support.

### ■ Afghanistan: British Council

**Hilary Benn:** [\[50946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to assist employees of the British Council who were offered an evacuation flight under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy who were not able to make it to the airport and are still in Afghanistan.



**James Heappey:**

*[Holding answer 22 September 2021]:* All British Council employees approved for the ARAP scheme have now left Afghanistan. The Government continues to press the Taliban to deliver on its commitment to allow foreign nationals and Afghans with valid travel documents to leave Afghanistan.

**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****Stephen Timms:**[\[51577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2021 to Question 46925 on Afghanistan: Refugees, what steps the Government is taking to support (a) welfare provision and (b) onward travel to the UK for people who were called forward for evacuation from Afghanistan but were unable to reach Kabul Airport, and who have subsequently travelled to Pakistan.

**James Heappey:**

Individuals who were called forward for evacuation but were unable to board a flight during Operation PITTING, who have subsequently arrived in a third country such as Pakistan, will be assisted by the High Commission, including support from the Defence Attaché. We are doing all we can to look after these individuals and will facilitate onward travel to the UK as soon as necessary security checks are completed. We are working with partners across Government and countries in the region to facilitate safe passage out of Afghanistan and to the UK for all eligible individuals.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[51751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will connect people arriving under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy with those they served with in Afghanistan.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[51753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will connect Afghan veterans with the bridging hotels accommodating Afghan refugees to allow those veterans to welcome refugees they have served with to the UK.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[51754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will connect local armed forces regiments with the bridging hotels and resettlement areas accommodating Afghan refugees to allow soldiers to contact Afghans they have served alongside.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[51757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will connect local barracks with local authorities and cities of sanctuaries to help support Operation Warm Welcome.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[51758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he plans to take to engage soldiers who are (a) serving and (b) no longer serving and who have served in Afghanistan as (i) regulars and (ii) reservists in Operation Warm Welcome.

**Leo Docherty:**

The whole of Government is engaged via Op WARM WELCOME in ensuring that those Afghan nationals relocated to the UK are provided with the best possible start to life in the UK. The Ministry of Defence is working to ensure that Afghans with a connection to Defence are supported by a network of Service-related expertise and experience, supplementing wider Government and third sector integration efforts, making them feel valued for their contribution to Defence and supported in their integration into life in the UK.

**■ British Nationals Abroad and Immigration: Afghanistan****Afzal Khan:**[\[51827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) British nationals and (b) Afghan nationals were called forward or authorised for evacuation as part of Operation Pitting but did not evacuate Afghanistan.

**James Heappey:**

Throughout Operation Pitting, supporting British Nationals and their immediate family to leave Afghanistan was one of our highest priorities. We helped over 8,000 to do so. We aimed to support all British Nationals so there was not the same "call forward" process as there was for Afghan nationals. We are aware that not all were able to leave so are encouraging any British Nationals remaining in Afghanistan to confirm their presence with us via the online form in order to receive important updates, alongside our regularly updated Travel Advice.

Additionally, under Operation Pitting 311 families eligible for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) were called forward but were not evacuated from Afghanistan, the vast majority of whom were Afghan nationals. Our efforts to contact and support these individuals and their dependants continue, and we are making every effort to assist them to reach the UK.

Our immediate focus is on ensuring safe passage for anyone remaining in Afghanistan who is eligible to come to the UK and wishes to leave. We continue to work closely with the Qatari authorities to facilitate the evacuation of British nationals from Kabul. Rapid Deployment Teams have been sent to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to reinforce our Embassy staff to process arrivals from Afghanistan. Teams have also deployed to Qatar and UAE to assist our operations there and we are providing consular support to British nationals who were evacuated by other allies, including via US airbases in Europe.

**■ Defence Equipment: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[51614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Major Projects 2020-21 Portfolio Data 2021, published on 15 July 2021, if he will publish the reasons for which projects in that report had data exempted under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act by project.

**Jeremy Quin:**

It is usual procurement practice to withhold commercially sensitive data/information from publication for a variety of reasons, such as, to protect the integrity of ongoing contractual negotiations and tendering activities which will vary in stages from programme to programme.

**■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[51615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49967 on Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement, for what reason the Government is unable to disclose whether the prime contractor for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract must be a UK-based company.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[51616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49966 on Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement, which companies received the £5 million design contracts for the Fleet Solid Support Ship contract.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Further to the above questions from the Rt Hon. Gentleman and my commitment to write to him about FSS contracts following Defence Oral Questions held on Monday 20 September:

**Competitive Procurement Phase**

Four procurement contracts have been awarded each for £5 million to develop a proposal for FSS. Contracts have been placed through the following lead companies representing the four consortia:

- Larsen & Toubro (of the Larsen & Toubro consortium, also including Leidos Innovations and Gibbs & Cox)
- Serco (of the Serco / Damen consortium, also including Damen)
- Navantia (of the Team Resolute consortium, also including Harland & Wolff and BMT)
- Babcock (of the Team UK consortium, also including BAE Systems)

Whilst the contracting party may be UK or non-UK the basis of the contract is that the work will be undertaken by the relevant consortium members that responded to and prequalified against the MOD's criteria for competition entry. Every consortium has a UK contingent or is exclusively UK.

**Manufacturing Phase**

A contract will subsequently be awarded for the manufacturing phase where the winning bidder will refine their concept design prior to the build of FSS ships. The Government has made clear that a substantial part of the build will be conducted in the UK, there is a requirement to integrate all ships in a UK shipyard. In addition

Social Value will represent a significant proportion of the evaluation of the bids. The contract will be awarded to a UK firm acting solely or as part of a consortium. The exact form that the contract will take is yet to be determined. Similarly the key sub-contracting roles beneath those primarily responsible for delivery will be determined as part of the award of the contract also helping to ensure that Government objectives are met.

#### ■ Ministry of Defence: Flags

**Justin Madders:** [\[50688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

**Justin Madders:** [\[50689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of the Union Jack flags purchased by his Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Since 2019, Team Leidos, who manage the Defence Logistic Commodities and Services contract for the Ministry of Defence (MOD), has procured Union flags from Sign Plus in Dalgety Bay, Fife, Scotland.

Under these arrangements, the MOD has centrally purchased 13 Union flags in the last two years all of which have been manufactured in the UK.

#### ■ RAF Linton-on-Ouse: Closures

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[51771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department plans to complete the final assessment and disposal details regarding RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

**Jeremy Quin:**

A target date for the disposal of RAF Linton-on-Ouse is currently being finalised and I will write to the hon. Member in due course to update him on our plans.

#### ■ Type 45 Destroyers: Guided Weapons

**Sarah Atherton:** [\[51888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which of the six Type 45 Destroyers will be (a) fitted with a Sea Ceptor surface-to-air missile, (b) the first to undergo the fitting of the Sea Ceptor and when and (c) the last to undergo the fitting of the Sea Ceptor and when that fitting will be complete.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Elements of the Sea Ceptor weapon system, including the Common Anti-Air Modular Missile (CAMM), will be integrated into the Sea Viper (SV) weapon system on all six Type 45 Destroyers. On current plans, the first ship is expected to achieve SV-CAMM Initial Operating Capability by early 2027 with the whole fleet rollout completed by the

end of 2032. The programme is dependent on the availability of ships to receive the upgrade, balanced against the Royal Navy's standing and future operational commitments.

**Sarah Atherton:**

[\[51889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress he has made on the procurement of the interim surface-to-surface missile guided weapon to replace the Harpoon on the six Type 45 Destroyer ships until the Future Anti-Ship Missile System is serviced.

**Jeremy Quin:**

We continue to scope options for the Royal Navy's next surface to surface guided weapon system, alongside wider lethality requirements, to allow us to deliver on the commitments outlined in the Integrated Review. No final decisions have yet been made.

**Sarah Atherton:**

[\[51890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a cruise missile service on the Type 45 Destroyers.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There are currently no plans to fit a cruise missile capability to Type 45 destroyers.

The Royal Navy has an effective submarine launch cruise missile capability. On a routine basis, we will continue to assess the utility and need for surface-launched cruise missiles.

## ■ Type 45 Destroyers: Repairs and Maintenance

**Sarah Atherton:**

[\[51891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Type 45 Destroyer ship will next undergo upgrades as part of the Power Improvement Package; and what the timescales are for the completion of upgrades on each of the six ships.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 22 September 2021 in response to questions 51039 and 51040.

### **Attachments:**

1. 51039 - Type 45 Destroyers [51039 - Type 45 Destroyers.docx]

## ■ Veterans: Civil Proceedings

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[51617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his oral contribution of 24 May 2021, Official Report, Column 16, if he will publish the statistical evidential basis for Northern Ireland veterans having been subject to vexatious claims and prosecutions; and how (a) vexatious claims and (b) vexatious prosecutions are defined in his Department's analysis.

**Leo Docherty:**

It is clear that the current system for addressing the legacy of Northern Ireland's past is not working well for anybody, most importantly victims and survivors. If our focus remains on achieving criminal justice outcomes, we will fail almost every family, as well as wider society. We have therefore put forward bold proposals which focus on information recovery and reconciliation, measures which are most likely to produce tangible benefits for victims and wider society, to effectively address legacy issues and help Northern Ireland to look to the future. The Northern Ireland Office Command Paper of July 2021 sets out some relevant statistics that have informed this proposed approach.

**Warships: Software****Sarah Atherton:**[\[51892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that all naval vessels have upgraded computer operating systems which are compatible with onshore systems.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Current legacy Computer Information Systems will be replaced imminently to ensure optimum compatibility for naval vessels. On current plans, the first installation of the new upgraded system is expected to commence in late 2021.

In addition, there is a funded programme of work to upgrade and maintain legacy systems and to ensure accreditation and interoperability is maintained.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****Broadcasting: Disability Aids****Feryal Clark:**[\[50778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that all recorded shows have adequate subtitles.

**Julia Lopez:**

The government recognises that as part of a digitally inclusive society, television content should be accessible for all UK audiences. Under the Communications Act 2003, the Secretary of State has the power to impose requirements on service providers for the purpose of ensuring that on demand services are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes requirements in relation to subtitling, audio description and sign language.

As part of the process to implement these new requirements, the Government asked Ofcom to provide recommendations on how legislation could make on-demand services more accessible. Ofcom published an initial report in December 2018, and then, following a request from DCMS, carried out an additional targeted consultation to inform further recommendations on how the new requirements would work in

practice to ensure that as far as possible all audiences should be able to access on-demand services. These latest proposals were published on 9 July 2021. We are giving them careful consideration and will set out next steps in due course.

## ■ Data Protection

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[51637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, whether the estimate of £1.04 billion for the net direct monetised benefit of the proposals over 10 years in Section 1, Paragraph 4 takes into account the (a) additional compliance costs and (b) loss of trade in the event that EU data adequacy status is removed.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[51638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, what assessment she has made of the compatibility of the estimates set out (a) Section 1 Paragraph 4 and (b) Section 3 Paragraph 71; and if she will provide reasons for the differences between those estimates.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[51639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, whether the compliance costs set out in Section 1 Paragraph 4 are the same as those set out in Section 3 Paragraph 71.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[51640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, if she will publish a five-year equivalent for the estimates of net direct monetised benefit set out in Section 1 Paragraph 4 for ease of comparison with the five-year estimates of trade impacts set out in Section 3 Paragraph 71.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[51641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, if she will publish a 10-year equivalent for the estimates of trade impacts set out in Section 3 Paragraph 71 for ease of comparison with the 10-year estimates of net direct monetised benefit set out in Section 1 Paragraph 4.

**Julia Lopez:**

The methodology and data used to develop the analysis is described in the report. It accounts for the variation in compliance costs across different scenarios with respect to the UK's EU adequacy decisions.

As set out in the report, this analysis is open to consultation. We are seeking further information at this stage in order to robustly quantify these impacts, including on trade, as we build a more detailed impact assessment. The Government would welcome responses to the consultation on this topic.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Welsh Government**

**Ruth Jones:** [\[43659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he last met Ministers in the Welsh Government.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Having only just been appointed Secretary of State at DCMS I look forward to meeting with Ministers in the Welsh Government in due course, and hope to develop an excellent working relationship with devolved administrations.

■ **Events Industry: Coronavirus**

**Sir Charles Walker:** [\[51622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will extend the support available to the events and exhibition industry due to the ongoing impact of the covid-19 outbreak on that sector.

**Julia Lopez:**

The government recognises the important contribution that events and exhibitions make to the UK's culture and economy, and the significant challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented. We have engaged closely with the sectors affected and listened to their concerns throughout the pandemic. We continue to engage with Her Majesty's Treasury to ensure that support for the events sector remains a focus.

This government has provided significant financial support throughout the pandemic including extending the £1.57 billion package of support for the Culture Recovery Fund with £300 million of additional funding for 21/22, the biggest arts funding package in history. To date, over £1.2 billion has been allocated from the £2 billion Fund, reaching over 5,000 individual organisations and sites.

We would encourage businesses in the events sector to review the initiatives in the government's support package. Information on the government's support for businesses and employees can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>.

■ **Facebook: Advertising**

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[50662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has been made of the implications for her policies in respect of the settlement of the US cases of United States Department of Housing and Urban Development vs Facebook.



**Julia Lopez:**

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits service providers from discriminating against people on the grounds of protected characteristics.

In response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights report on The Right to Privacy (Article 8) and the Digital Revolution, the government stated that it and other bodies have considered issues around online targeting. The full report can be found here:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt5801/jtselect/jtrights/313/313.pdf>

The work undertaken which is referenced in the report includes the Information Commissioner's Office's (ICO) work on advertising technology (AdTech):

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/our-work-on-adtech/#blogs>

The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation has published its review into online targeting and bias in algorithmic decision making:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cdei-review-of-online-targeting>

The Competition and Markets Authority market has published its study into online platforms and the digital advertising market in the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/online-platforms-and-digital-advertising-market-study>

In a public consultation called [Data: A new direction](#) (launched 10 September 2021) the government is also consulting on reform proposals to enable organisations to use personal data and sensitive personal data for the purpose of managing the risk of bias in their AI systems. The ICO has also drafted [Guidance on AI and Data Protection](#), which explains how to process personal data in order to design and test algorithms.

**■ Mobile Phones: Aerials****Hilary Benn:****[50616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will review the potential effect of the 2017 Electronic Communications Code on rents paid to landowners to allow mobile masts on their land.

**Julia Lopez:**

Since the introduction of the reforms in 2017 we have continually listened to feedback from stakeholders on the impact those changes have had on the expansion and improvement of digital networks across the UK. The culmination of this process was a consultation on potential further reform to the Code, published in January 2021. The consultation closed in March 2021 and responses are being considered. The Government's response will be published shortly.

The provisions concerning how rents are calculated were not part of that consultation. The 2017 reforms were intended to strike a balance between ensuring individual landowners do not incur any losses and enabling the deployment of digital networks more cost effective. It is the Government's view that the cost of acquiring rights to install digital infrastructure prior to 2017 was too high and needed to be addressed.

The pricing regime now in place is more closely aligned to those for utilities such as water and electricity and reflects the fact that access to good quality digital services is an increasingly critical part of daily life for residents across the UK.

## ■ Public Libraries: Finance

**Gill Furniss:** [\[50737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the resource and capital budget needs of public libraries in the financial years up to 2024-25.

**Julia Lopez:**

Funding for public libraries is not ring-fenced but forms part of the overall Local Government Funding Settlement.

In this year's Settlement, the Government made available an increase in Core Spending Power in England from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms. This recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain current service levels.

Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service that meets local needs and it is for each local authority to consider how best to manage their total funding mindful of this statutory duty.

## ■ Tourism and Travel: Coronavirus

**Christine Jardine:** [\[51806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to provide (a) long-term financial support and (b) guidance to the travel and tourism sectors in (i) Edinburgh West and (ii) the UK to help those sectors recover from the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The government has provided over £35 billion in support to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors over the course of the pandemic in the form of grants, loans and tax breaks.

The government also cut the rate of VAT for certain UK-wide supplies in the tourism and hospitality sectors to 5% in July 2021, with this significantly reduced rate remaining until the end of this month. To help businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate, a 12.5% rate will then apply for a further six months until the end of March 2022.

VisitBritain, the national tourist board, worked in collaboration with the tourist boards of the devolved administrations to develop the UK-Wide 'Good to Go' COVID-19 Secure Industry Standard, currently in use by over 45,000 tourism businesses.

The Tourism Recovery Plan points to a number of UK-wide initiatives, like the £10 million National Lottery Days Out campaign due to launch in October. This will

stimulate demand for more off-season day trips to tourist sites across the UK this autumn.

The plan also announced a new rail pass launching later this fiscal year to help make it easier and more sustainable for domestic tourists to get around. The pass is planned to be available in Scotland, England and Wales.

I will continue to work together with my devolved counterparts to assess how we can most effectively support the tourism sector's recovery.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children in Care

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[51628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 6 September 2021 to Question 41094 on Children in Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of conducting research into the long-term outcomes for children placed across borders.

**Will Quince:**

The department has not made an assessment in this area. Where possible, local authorities should provide accommodation that is within their local area as moving a child away from their home area is not a decision to be taken lightly. There are clear statutory requirements in place to safeguard young people, and it is the responsibility of the placing local authority and Directors of Children's Services who must approve all distant placements.

Statistically, the department collects data on placement type, reason for placement change and three separate pieces of information in relation to the locality of placements. The location data includes:

- information about the distance the child is placed away from their home postcode
- whether the placement is located inside or outside their responsible local authority
- the country of the placement (England, UK or otherwise).

Figures on placements, distance from the home placement and the location of the placement, inside or outside the council boundary, were published in the underlying data 'National - children looked after at 31 March by placement type, distance of placement and locality of placement' of the statistical release 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2019 to 2020' at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2020>.

## ■ Financial Services: Education

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[50714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to institute financial skills education into the national curriculum; and whether he plans for that to include education about cooperatives and mutuals.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed.

Financial education forms part of the citizenship national curriculum which can be taught at all key stages and is compulsory at key stages 3 and 4:

<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>. Financial education ensures that pupils are taught the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and managing financial risk. At secondary school, pupils are taught about income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent. Schools have the freedom to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of their pupils and they may choose to teach about cooperatives and mutuals if they wish.

The department has introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides young people with the knowledge and financial skills to make important financial decisions. In the primary mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic knowledge that pupils should be taught. This knowledge is vital, as a strong grasp of numeracy and numbers will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, using percentages. There is also some specific content about financial education, such as calculations with money. The secondary mathematics curriculum develops pupils' understanding and skills in relation to more complex personal finance issues such as calculating loan repayments, interest rates and compound interest.

The department works closely with the Money and Pensions Service and other stakeholders, such as Her Majesty's Treasury, to consider what can be discovered from other sector initiatives and whether there is scope to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

## ■ Pre-school Education

**John McDonnell:** [\[51582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to improve accessibility to early years services.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[51659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the accessibility of early years services in the North West region.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[51660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the consistency of early years services for children up to five years old across the UK.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[51661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to promote and improve access to early years services.

**Will Quince:**

High quality, accessible childcare is important in ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life. As of 31 March 2021, 96% of providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register were judged Good or Outstanding, a substantial increase from 74% in 2012. Ofsted are responsible for monitoring the quality of provision.

The department continues to monitor the sufficiency of childcare through regular attendance data collection and monitoring the open or closed status of providers. We also discuss sufficiency of provision in regular conversations with local authorities. Local authorities are not currently reporting any significant sufficiency or supply issues and we have not seen a significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place, either this term or since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020. The department provides support to local authorities with low take up of the entitlements.

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours free childcare each week, providing children with high-quality early education. Take-up of this entitlement is high, with 90% of 3 and 4 year olds registered for a 15 hours per week free early education place in January 2021. Eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to an additional 15 hours to help them with the additional costs associated with childcare. Households on a low income of under £15,400 (or £16,190 if receiving child tax credits) can qualify for 15 hours free childcare for 2 year olds.

In addition to free early education entitlements, the government offers Tax-Free Childcare for children from 0 to 11 years old, or up to 16 if disabled. For every £8 parents pay into their Tax-Free Childcare account, the government will pay £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year. For disabled children, the maximum is £4,000 per year. In total, 308,000 families used Tax-Free Childcare for 364,000 children in June 2021.

Working parents on a low income may also be eligible for help with up to 85% of their childcare costs (for children under 16) through Universal Credit Childcare. This is subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for two or more children, payable in arrears.

As part of the COVID-19 education recovery strategy we are investing £180 million for training for early years staff to support the very youngest children's learning and development. This includes Nuffield Early Language Intervention, improving the language skills of reception age children who need it most during COVID-19. Two thirds of eligible primary schools have signed up and we estimate 90,000 reception

age children will get extra support with their speech and language development. Further detail on the additional training will be made available in due course.

## ■ Pupils: Food Poverty

**Stephen Timms:**

**[51580]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of child hunger on levels of lost learning.

**Will Quince:**

We recognise that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education and we are committed to helping pupils catch up as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The department commissioned Renaissance Learning to provide a baseline assessment of lost learning for pupils in schools in England and monitor progress over the course of the 2020/21 academic year. The latest interim findings from this research were published on 4 June:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year-interim-report>.

Since June 2020, we have announced more than £3 billion to support education recovery, including over £950 million flexible funding to schools and £1.5 billion for a national tutoring revolution. This will have a material impact in closing gaps that have emerged.

Recovery programmes have been designed to allow early years, school, and college leaders the flexibility to support those pupils most in need. This includes the most disadvantaged and will expand our reforms in two areas where the evidence is clear that our investment will have a significant impact for disadvantaged children - high quality tutoring and great teaching.

We have provided around £450 million worth of food vouchers to families whilst schools were largely closed. Now schools are open again, school food provision has returned to typical delivery arrangements, with meals being provided free of charge to eligible pupils at school. If pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals are required to stay at home due to COVID-19, schools should continue to work with their school catering team or food provider to offer a good quality lunch parcel.

Throughout 2021 we are investing up to £220 million in our holiday activities and food programme. Taking place in schools and community venues across the country, delivery began at Easter, has run across the summer and will run in the Christmas holidays. It supports disadvantaged pupils and their families with enriching activities, providing them with healthy food, helping them to learn new things and supporting socialisation and well-being. We are also further investing with £24 million in the National Breakfast Club programme, providing breakfast clubs in schools in disadvantaged areas.

Beyond this, the Department for Work and Pension has provided £429 million through the Covid Local Support Grant. This is being run by local authorities in England to support the hardest hit families and individuals with food and essential utility costs.

### ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[48364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on recording absence from school as authorised in the event that eligible children are required to isolate following a covid-19 vaccination.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Children aged 12 to 15 in England will now be offered one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, following advice from the four UK Chief Medical Officers. Vaccinating children should help to reduce the need for pupils to have time off school and reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools.

When a child is not well enough to not attend their school or college, as usual this may be recorded as authorised absence due to illness.

### ■ Schools: Religion

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[51662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that pupils in Bolton South East constituency have access to a secular or community-ethos school.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government is committed to offering parents and children a diverse education system consisting of a wide variety of schools and this includes faith schools. Within Bolton South East, 24 of the 47 primary and secondary schools are not designated as faith schools.

The vast majority of parents are offered a place at a school of their choice. For the Bolton local authority, in 2021, 97.6% of parents received an offer from one of their top three choices of primary school, while 94.4 % received an offer from one of their top three choices of secondary school.

Faith schools have played an important role in our education system for many years and are popular with parents. They have a strong track record of delivering excellent education and achieving high standards and, on average, perform better than non-faith schools. These schools, like all other schools, play a vital role in promoting integration and supporting pupils to understand different faiths and communities.

Although faith schools have greater freedom to maintain their religious ethos, they remain subject to the same obligations as other state funded schools to promote community cohesion and integration, and to teach a broad and balanced curriculum.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Inspections****Tom Hunt:**[\[50147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is possible for a school to be graded by Ofsted as outstanding or good if there are concerns that special educational needs provision is not being provided at an equivalent level.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

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

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers****Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[51569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of seasonal workers from abroad on UK food security; for what reason the pilot Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), currently underway, caters for only one-third of the number of such workers permitted prior to the UK's withdrawal from the EU; what recent discussions he has held with the Home Secretary on restoring the previous total permitted to enter the UK; what steps he will take to reduce the paperwork involved in processing applicants to become seasonal workers; and when a permanent SAWS will be established.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK's food supply is highly resilient and the food industry is well versed in dealing with scenarios that can impact food supply. However, Defra is aware of the impact that labour shortages are having on the supply chains and we continue to work with stakeholders like the NFU to monitor the situation.

Defra is working closely with industry and the Home Office - which engages with a wide range of stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations, when designing and implementing immigration policy - to understand better the effectiveness of interventions and to ensure there is a long-term strategy for the food and farming workforce beyond 2021.

Horticulture, in particular, relies heavily on seasonal labour, and whilst the number of workers needed varies throughout the year, Defra estimates approximately 50,000 seasonal workers are needed annually to bring in the harvest. For 2021 we envisaged that growers will recruit more from an increasing pool of domestic labour, supported with 30,000 workers from the Seasonal Workers Pilot extension.

Although the numbers of workers have increased based on the success of the Pilot so far, it is not designed to meet the full labour needs of the horticulture sector. The extension and expansion of the Pilot for 2021 will allow for further review of the Pilot, including how growers will reduce their reliance on migrant labour now we have left



the EU , whilst also easing some of the pressure felt on farms when they are at their busiest.

The Government encourages all sectors to make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, careers options, wage increases and to invest in increased automation technology. To support these efforts, Defra is working with the Department for Work and Pensions to raise awareness of career opportunities within the horticulture sector among UK workers.

The Home Office is responsible for the visa licensing system that processes applicants to become seasonal workers, including the paperwork involved with that process.

## ■ Beer: Carbon Dioxide

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[51651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives from the brewing and beer industries on the potential impact of an industrial carbon dioxide shortage on that sector in the coming months.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are aware of the issues faced by the brewing and beer industry due to the shortage and are working closely with them to provide support and advice. We have had extensive meetings with representatives from food and drink sectors, and those conversations are continuing to further explore impacts and discuss potential solutions.

## ■ Climate Change

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[51801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support communities worst hit by the impacts of climate change such as flooding and biodiversity loss.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Climate change is already with us, and further changes are expected in the coming decades, despite ambitious commitments from the UK and the global community to cut carbon emissions. Building the resilience of our society, economy and environment to the impacts of climate change is therefore a priority for government, on land and at sea.

Between 2015 and 2021 government invested £2.6 billion to better protect 314,000 homes from flooding. In July 2020, Defra published its floods Policy Statement, setting out the Government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk.

Starting from 2021, the Government will invest £5.2 billion in a six-year capital investment programme for flood and coastal erosion risk management to build over

2,000 new flood defences. This investment will better protect 336,000 properties, including 290,000 homes, from flooding and coastal erosion by 2027.

In addition, up to £170 million will be spent to accelerate work on 22 shovel-ready flood defence schemes that will begin construction before the end of 2021/2022, which will provide an immediate boost to jobs supporting local economies as communities recover from the impact of coronavirus.

An additional £200 million will be invested in the Innovative Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. This will help over 25 local areas over six years to take forward wider innovative actions that improve their resilience to flooding and coastal erosion.

In England, we are establishing a Nature Recovery Network. As part of the Network, we are taking steps to bring 75% of protected sites by area into favourable condition, and to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of protected sites. Restoring and expanding habitats is good for wildlife, but nature recovery also provides wider environmental benefits, from clean air to recreation to tackling climate change.

Such restoration will be hugely beneficial in helping to support the resilience of ecosystems themselves to climate change. For example, improving the condition and diversity within, and connectivity between, our wildlife habitats will help species survive in their existing locations, and allow them to move towards more suitable climates where necessary.

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT), has recently worked with Defra's Local Adaptation Advisory Panel, to publish adaptation guidance for local authorities. This good practice guide outlines practical steps for local authorities to enhance local resilience. ADEPT has also published its blueprint to accelerating resilience to climate change risks and green recovery at the local level.

The UK is at the forefront of marine protection with 372 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) protecting 38% of UK waters. We have built a comprehensive network of MPAs and are focusing on making sure they are protected properly.

In June the Government published its response to the Benyon Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMA). The government will designate a number of sites in 2022. JNCC and Natural England, along with Cefas, have developed and published ecological criteria based on the principles outlined in the Benyon Review to start selecting potential HPMA locations.

A number of estuarine and coastal habitat restoration initiatives to benefit people and nature are underway, including the Environment Agency's Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef initiative. Natural England is also leading the EU-funded LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES project, which aims to restore seagrass and maerl habitat in five Special Areas of Conservation.

Marine nature-based solutions, including the protection and restoration of blue carbon habitats, will contribute towards achieving the government's vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse ocean and seas' and our climate change objectives. The UK Marine Strategy provides the framework for monitoring, assessing and taking measures to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status in our seas.

## ■ Horses: Animal Breeding

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[51867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2021 to Question 43683 on Horses: Animal Breeding, and with reference to the Government Response to the e-petition entitled Introduce national limits on horse breeding, published on 4 August 2021, which key stakeholders in the equine sector the Government has engaged with; and on which dates it has engaged with each of those stakeholders in the last 12 months.

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[51868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2021 to Question 43684 on Horses: Animal Breeding, and with reference to the Government Response to the e-petition entitled Introduce national limits on horse breeding, published on 4 August 2021, how many times in the last 12 months his Department has been in contact with (a) World Horse Welfare and (b) the British Horse Council; which other (i) equine stakeholders and (ii) rescue and rehoming bodies his Department has been in contact with; and what recent assessment the Minister has made of the health of the sector.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We continue to engage closely with key stakeholders in the equine sector about a range of equine welfare issues. My department currently meets on a fortnightly basis with equine stakeholders including the British Horse Society, the British Equine Veterinary Association and World Horse Welfare.

The sector keep us regularly updated of the current health of the sector, sharing their surveys particularly with respect to rescue and rehoming rates, and information on cruelty investigations. In order to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector, we held monthly meetings with the National Equine Welfare Council during winter 2020/21 and increased our engagement with other equine stakeholders.

Defra remains committed to continued engagement with the sector.

## ■ Veterinary Medicine: Regulation

**Virginia Crosbie:** [\[51897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating an independent ombudsman for the veterinary profession; and what assessment he has made of the ability of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to regulate the veterinary surgeon profession.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Department believes that the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is a fit for purpose regulator. The Department does not consider an independent ombudsman would improve the regulation of the veterinary profession. RCVS have been developing recommendations on reforming the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, including an overhaul of the disciplinary framework and fitness to practise regime. We will carefully consider their proposals.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Afghanistan: British Council****Zarah Sultana:**[\[51878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to urgently evacuate British Council employees stranded in Afghanistan.

**Amanda Milling:**

We stand by our commitment to help all Afghans who are eligible to come to the UK. This includes Afghans who helped our allied forces, our Embassy and civil society, or those who face a particular risk from the Taliban. The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) offers resettlement for Afghan staff who have assisted the UK government, and their families. We are also setting up the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) which will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans over the next year and up to a total of 20,000 over four years.

**■ Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals****Daisy Cooper:**[\[51862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will review her Department's policy of (a) not responding to and (b) refusing further cases from hon. Members who are requesting urgent assistance for people still in Afghanistan who (i) have helped the allied forces during the 20 year conflict there or (ii) are at risk.

**Amanda Milling:**

The former Foreign Secretary undertook to reply to all MPs who wrote about Afghanistan cases before 31 August by Monday 6 September. This was done on 5 September with a letter from Lord Ahmad to all those Parliamentarians who had sent cases to the FCDO including an additional Dear Colleague letter on the 6 September. As Minister Cleverly said in the House on 9 September, we are determined to work with the Home Office and the MOD to ensure all cases are passed to the correct Department.

We stand by our commitment to help all Afghans who are eligible to come to the UK. This includes Afghans who helped our forces and our Embassy as well as civil society, or those who face a particular risk from the Taliban. The Afghan Relocations

and Assistance Policy (ARAP) offers resettlement for Afghan staff who have assisted the UK government, and their families. We are also setting up the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) which will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans over the next year and up to a total of 20,000 over four years.

We have had a huge number of people contacting us since the beginning of the crisis, more in fact than during the entire Covid crisis – some 230,000 emails to date. In order to dedicate resources to those who need our support in Afghanistan, we will not be able to respond individually to every email, but we are not refusing further cases.

## ■ Afghanistan: Repatriation

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[49292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will consider establishing an emergency (a) telephone helpline and (b) email address for hon Members who wish to make enquiries on behalf of (i) UK citizens seeking to return to the UK and (ii) Afghan nationals seeking safe passage to the UK following the fall of the previous Afghan government.

**Amanda Milling:**

As the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa said in the House on 15 September, during the evacuation operation alone the FCDO received over 200,000 emails. Responding to cases and correspondence from hon. Members is a priority for this Government. We take, and still take seriously, our duty to look into every single case raised by a Member. Where members of the public and MPs have written, either through the [help@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:help@fcdo.gov.uk) mailbox, or through standard FCDO correspondence, these have been triaged and the details logged. MPs also have access to the MP hotline and FCDO staff continue to follow up on urgent cases.

## ■ Arabian Sea: Tankers

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[50663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) she and (b) her predecessor has held discussions with relevant counterparts on the death of a UK worker in an attack on an oil tanker in the Arabian Sea on 30 July 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

The former Foreign Secretary raised the Iranian attack on the MV Mercer Street, which resulted in the death of a British national, in a call with the Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian on 13 September. The former Foreign Secretary also discussed the attack with Five Eyes Foreign Ministers on 2 August. The UK condemned the attack on the MV Mercer Street at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on 6 August and the Defence Secretary condemned Iran's actions at a UNSC debate on maritime security on 9 August. On 6 August, the countries of the G7, along with the EU issued a statement condemning the unlawful attack and attributing it to Iran.

**■ Belarus: Conditions of Employment****Catherine West:** [\[51799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49228 on Belarus: Conditions of Employment, whether she has had discussions on those concerns with (a) British and (b) European trade unions.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK Government continues to engage with a wide range of interlocutors to discuss the situation in Belarus, and the ways in which we can get support to those who need it most. We are concerned about the increasing restrictions on workers' committees and trade unions in Belarus as a result of recent amendments to the law on mass events. We raised the issue of trade unions during our intervention on Belarus at the UN's International Labour Conference in June.

**■ British Council****Chris Stephens:** [\[51742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if her Department will publish the business case from the British Council in respect of the restructuring plans, including the (a) financial cost of the pay bill and (b) numbers of staff likely to be affected.

**James Cleverly:**

It is for the British Council to comment on the terms of their restructuring plans.

**Chris Stephens:** [\[51746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many roles in the British Council her Department plans to privatise between 2021 and 2022; and how many of those roles will be based (a) overseas and (b) in the UK.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO has no plans to privatise any British Council roles.

**■ British Council: Loans****Chris Stephens:** [\[51743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish the terms and conditions of the loan imposed by her Department on the British Council.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO has provided a £100million loan to support the British Council's restructuring plan. The loan was made in line with the Market Economy Operator Principle to ensure the UK government complied with state aid regulation and the terms were commercially comparable. As these loans are intended to support the Council's commercial operations, assessments have been conducted on the British

Council's financial data and credit worthiness to ensure the terms are in line with those which any private operator would provide.

**Chris Stephens:**

[\[51744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department has applied EU state rules to the loan provided to the British Council; and whether those rules still apply after the UK's exit from the EU.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO has provided a £100m loan to support the British Council's restructuring plan. The loan was made in line with the Market Economy Operator Principle to ensure the UK government complied with state aid regulation. The UK is still required to be in compliance with several international obligations on state subsidies and needs to ensure that subsidies do not have a competitive advantage in the market it operates in and fair trade is not distorted.

#### ■ **British Council: Pay**

**Chris Stephens:**

[\[51741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the average pay bill is for an employee of the British Council, including National Insurance and pension contributions.

**James Cleverly:**

The British Council publishes staff costs as part of its Annual Accounts. It would be for the British Council to comment on more detailed payments.

#### ■ **Chile: Foreign Relations**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[51777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she plans to have with the President of Chile during his visit to Glasgow for COP26.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign Secretary's meetings during COP26, and the agendas for those meetings, will be finalised in due course.

#### ■ **Chile: Human Rights**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[51776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will raise the matter of allegations of human rights abuses by members of the Chilean security forces since October 2019 with the President of Chile during his visit to Glasgow for COP26.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign Secretary's meetings during COP26, and the agendas for those meetings, will be finalised in due course. We continue to monitor the situation in Chile

since the unrest two years ago. The UK has expressed its concerns about allegations of human rights abuses by members of the security forces in talks with representatives of the Chilean Government. We welcome the acknowledgement by President Piñera and other Ministers that there have been human rights abuses, as well as their commitments that these allegations will be fully investigated, and if appropriate, perpetrators will be prosecuted.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Catherine West:**

[\[51798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help ensure effective global efforts to prevent the waste of covid-19 vaccines as a result of expiration dates.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is working with COVAX and its international partners, including the World Health Organisation and UNICEF in support of country governments, to allocate vaccines according to need, and ensure rapid rollout of doses to priority groups and prevent wastage. Individual countries will decide whether they wish to accept vaccines, whether donated bilaterally or allocated by COVAX.

The capacity of health systems in delivering doses, and their expiry dates are taken into account in these decisions. At country level, support includes strengthening secure and resilient supply chains for distribution, administering COVID-19 vaccines, including in hard-to-reach locations, and working with communities to build vaccine confidence. We are also engaging through our humanitarian networks to ensure that delivery planning and financing addresses the challenges of delivery in fragile environments. We monitor delivery progress and challenges through our country network and engagement with regional agencies.

## ■ **EU Countries: Climate Change**

**Catherine West:**

[\[51797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her European counterparts following the recent fires in Greece and Turkey on (a) the regional effects of climate change and (b) collaborative efforts to tackle climate change.

**Wendy Morton:**

Working together on climate change is a shared priority for the UK, Greece and Turkey, as well as our other European counterparts. We welcome the emphasis Greece has given to tackling climate change, boosting green energy, legislating for net zero 2050, enacting an ambitious green, sustainable Recovery Plan and a phasing-out of coal-fired power stations. We look forward to welcoming Greece and Turkey as active partners at COP26 in November in Glasgow, along with our other global partners. We are developing a major green finance conference with Turkey to be held in 2022, designed to support the development of a green finance eco-system



in Turkey in support of COP26 objectives. We have also been working with partners in France, Germany and Italy on collaborative initiatives to support Turkey's climate change efforts. In 2020/21 we have proposed a major trade and investment initiative in Turkey targeted at developing Turkey's 'Green Bond' market in the run up to the COP26 conference. We will continue to work with our partners on these important issues.

■ **India: British Council**

**Chris Stephens:**

[\[51745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the future earnings of the British Council after the sale of its IELTS business in India.

**James Cleverly:**

The FCDO worked closely with the British Council, UK Government Investments, Ernst & Young, and Lazard to assess the sale of the IELTS business in India. The offer was fair and reasonable, and the proceeds from the sale will strengthen the British Council's financial position and support its modernisation process.

■ **India: Religious Freedom**

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[51719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the report by the charity Open Doors entitled Destructive Lies, what assessment her Department has made of the levels of freedom of religion or belief of Christian and Muslim minorities in India.

**Amanda Milling:**

We look to India to uphold all freedoms and rights guaranteed in its strong constitution, and by the international instruments to which India is a party. We engage with India on a range of human rights matters, working with Union and State Governments, and with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), to build capacity and share expertise to promote human rights for all. We condemn any instances of discrimination because of religion or belief, regardless of the country or faith involved.

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[51720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help promote the rights of religious minorities in India.

**Amanda Milling:**

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects promoting minority rights. Over the last three years, they have worked with local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to bring together young people of diverse faith backgrounds to work together on social action projects in their local communities. This year, the British High Commission supported an interfaith leadership programme for a cohort of emerging Indian faith leaders, including

Christians, creating an opportunity to exchange expertise on leading modern, inclusive faith communities, and promoting values of tolerance and multi-culturalism. We also raise issues relevant to religious minorities in our engagement with Union and State authorities. On 15 March, while visiting India, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, discussed the situation for Christians with India's then-Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kishan Reddy.

## ■ Iran: UN Climate Conference 2021

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[51624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on the UK's reputation of the issue of an invitation to Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi to attend the COP26 summit, in light of Mr Raisi's involvement in serious human rights violations.

**James Cleverly:**

COP26 invitations are controlled by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and, as such, the hosting state does not determine invitations. Iran matters to the global climate agenda, and we will use diplomacy to achieve our objectives. To advance these objectives, the UK Government has invited Iran to attend the COP26 World Leader Summit. The UK has also designated Iran as a Human Rights Priority Country and we will use all appropriate opportunities to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record, including during the United Nations General Assembly session. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course, which includes committing to improving human rights in Iran.

## ■ Iraq: Yazidis

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[51716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions (a) she and (b) officials in her Department have had with her international counterparts on establishing an investigation into the fate and location of the 2,673 Yazidi women and children who have been missing since 2014 in Iraq.

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[51717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking (a) independently and (b) jointly with (i) her international counterparts and (ii) international bodies to help ensure that victims of Daesh atrocities are provided with reparations.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is a key ally to survivor and minority communities who suffered atrocities under Daesh. We played a leading role in the establishment of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD). We champion its work in gathering evidence of crimes, including sexual violence against minority communities and welcome its expanded engagement with witnesses,

survivors and impacted communities. Our Embassy in Baghdad has regular discussions with the Government of Iraq and UNITAD, encouraging their closer co-operation to achieve justice for victims of Daesh's crimes.

The passage of the Yazidi Survivors Law in March 2021, which includes provisions to search for missing survivors, is a welcome step toward justice and reparations for survivors. We continue to work with a range of actors including the Government of Iraq, minorities' organisations and survivors to ensure this law is fully implemented. We are funding both psycho-social care for female survivors of conflict related sexual violence, and technical support to Iraq's Directorate of Yazidi Affairs, responsible for implementation of the law.

## ■ Israel: Palestinians

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[49945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Department for International Development's Research Study into Value for Money Investment in People to People Programming in Israel and Palestine, what steps her Department has taken to implement the recommendation from that study that donors invest in a wide range of programme sectors.

**James Cleverly:**

We are taking forward relevant recommendations in the research study undertaken by the Department for International Development "Value for Money Investment in People to People Programming in Israel and Palestine". A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. That is why we support steps to increase understanding and dialogue between the parties that can help create the conditions for meaningful negotiations.

## ■ Nigeria: Abduction

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[51718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support their Nigerian counterparts in locating and rescuing (a) Leah Sharibu and (b) other abducted girls in Nigeria.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are deeply concerned by the abduction and continued captivity of children by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) in North East Nigeria. Leah Sharibu, who was abducted by ISWA in 2018, and a number of the Chibok schoolgirls, abducted by Boko Haram in 2014, are among those still missing. We continue to raise these cases with the Government of Nigeria, most recently in June. The Nigerian Government has provided assurances it is doing all it can to secure the release of all those kidnapped.

We have provided mentoring and capacity building support to Nigerian Police Force units to improve their anti-kidnap capacity, to help reduce harm to victims and to hold those responsible to account. We are also providing a comprehensive package of

support to Nigeria to help tackle the terrorist threat in the North East. My [Minister Ford] predecessor visited Nigeria in April where he discussed insecurity, including kidnaps, with the Foreign Minister and the President's Chief of Staff, and raised the importance of protecting all communities. He also discussed the impact insecurity has on education with the Nigerian Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Education in July in the margins of the Global Education Summit.

## ■ Palestinian Authority

**Steve McCabe:** [\[49944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 2018-19 Memorandum of Understanding between her Department and the Palestinian Authority, whether her Department carried out an assessment to determine whether there had been any breach of commitments by the Palestinian Authority in 2018-19; and whether her Department raised with the Palestinian Authority any concerns on breaches of the Memorandum of Understanding in that period.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[49946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 2019–20 Memorandum of Understanding between her Department and the Palestinian Authority, whether her Department carried out an assessment to determine whether there had been any breach of the commitments by the Palestinian Authority in 2019-20; and whether her Department raised with the Palestinian Authority any concerns on breaches of the Memorandum of Understanding in that period.

**James Cleverly:**

Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle any language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We have a regular dialogue with the PA in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other. We continue to assess the PA's commitment to peace in line with our Partnership Principles and we assess that the PA continues to demonstrate a credible commitment to our agreements.

## ■ Russia: Elections

**Catherine West:** [\[51796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of allegations of electoral fraud in Russian legislative elections; and whether she has made representations to her Russian counterpart in response to those allegations.

**Wendy Morton:**

*We are disappointed by the undue limitations that Russia has placed on election monitoring, a key element of democratic scrutiny. We are aware of a number of allegations made in relation to the conduct of the Duma elections. In addition, the*

*measures taken by the Russian authorities to marginalise civil society, silence independent media, and exclude genuine opposition candidates from participating in the elections undermine political plurality, and are at odds with Russia's international commitments. We assess that the conduct of these elections represents a serious step back for democratic freedoms in Russia.*

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **Alzheimer's Disease: Diagnosis**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[49958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the availability of CT and MRI scans for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* No such assessment has been made.

### ■ **Bereavement Support Payment**

**Steve Reed:**

[\[50666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of bereavement support provided by local authorities in England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* No specific assessment has been made.

We continue to work closely with bereavement services to ensure support is available and assess what is required by the sector.

### ■ **Botulinum Toxin: Animal Experiments**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[40685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to ban the use of animals in the testing of botox.

**Edward Argar:**

Cosmetic testing on animals was banned in the United Kingdom in 1998 and household products have not been tested on animals in the UK since 2011, with such testing formally banned in 2015.

Botox (Botulinum toxin) is regulated as a medicine in the UK. Unlike many biological medicines, a validated cell-based release assay has been approved for botulinum toxin in the UK and does not require the use of animals in the testing of Botox. There is no plan to alter this policy currently.

## ■ Cancer: Mental Health Services

**Alex Norris:**

[\[50753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 12276 on Cancer: Mental Health Services, what assessment his Department has made of the extent to which patients' psychosocial support needs are being addressed twice in their first year after diagnosis, as is required by the 2021-22 Quality and Outcomes Framework cancer requirements since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* No data is yet available on the proportion of practices meeting Quality and Outcomes Framework requirements in 2021/22.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have established a task and finish group to review psychosocial support for people affected by cancer. The NHS Long Term Plan states that where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer should receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan based on holistic needs assessment, end of treatment summaries and health and wellbeing information and support, including for mental health needs.

Those with long term conditions, such as cancer, have been identified as priority patients for accessing Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services, which are being integrated with physical health services, to better align psychological therapies within primary and secondary care pathways.

## ■ Carers: Unpaid Work

**Sara Britcliffe:**

[\[48385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to improve the current package of support for unpaid carers.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We will take steps to ensure that unpaid carers have the support, advice and respite they need, fulfilling the goals of the Care Act 2014. We will work with stakeholders, including unpaid carers, to co-develop our plans and publish further detail in a white paper for reform later this year.

## ■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[49233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that trans men and non-binary people with a cervix are invited for routine cervical screening.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* All individuals are invited for cervical screening based on their registered gender in their general practitioner (GP) records. Only those who are registered as female will be invited for cervical screening

according to the normal intervals. As such, if a transgender man or non-binary person is registered with their GP as a man, they will not receive these invitations.

However, GPs can, if requested, update records to ensure individuals are invited for the screening to which they are entitled. We encourage all trans men and non-binary people to contact their GP to ensure that they are invited for screening appointments.

## ■ Contraceptives

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[51629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, ahead of World Contraception Day on 26 September, how many community pharmacies are commissioned to provide free emergency contraception.

**Maggie Throup:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[51586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people died within twenty one days of receiving a covid-19 vaccination in England during the first six months of 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

Public Health England does not hold the data in the format requested.

## ■ Dementia: Diagnosis

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[49957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to run a regular national audit of specialist dementia diagnostic services, extending beyond the existing National Memory Clinic Audit.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* The National Memory Clinic Audit began this month and is managed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. There are currently no plans to run additional regular national audits of specialist dementia diagnostic services. However, regions may decide to undertake local audits independently.

## ■ Dental Services: West Dorset

**Chris Loder:**

[\[48362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS dentists there are in West Dorset.

**Maria Caulfield:**

While data is not held specifically for West Dorset, there are 684 general dental practitioners delivering National Health Service care in Dorset.

**■ Dental Services: York****Rachael Maskell:** [\[44401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to ensure the accessibility of NHS dental services in York.

**Maria Caulfield:**

National Health Service dental practices in York have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also issued guidance on flexible commissioning to share best practice on targeting the available capacity at those most in need.

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to increase access, including for routine care, as quickly as possible, taking into account the ongoing infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements.

**■ Dermatology: Recruitment****Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[50621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of dermatologists in England.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* The next Spending Review will set out further details of the Government's spending plans for the National Health Service workforce, including dermatologists.

**■ Developmental Language Disorder Awareness Day****Geraint Davies:** [\[49940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to mark Developmental Language Disorder Awareness Day on 15 October 2021.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* We currently have no specific plans to do so.

**■ Health Services: York****Rachael Maskell:** [\[49202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle NHS staff shortages in York.

**Edward Argar:**

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a member of the regional retention programme, which aims to maximise the retention of the workforce. Work includes recent and ongoing recruitment such as the 'Bring Back Staff' initiative, returning retirees, medical support workers, newly recruited health care support



workers and international recruitment. Regional and national health and wellbeing offers are available to support the existing workforce.

## ■ Heart Diseases: Medical Treatments

**Steve McCabe:** [\[50610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of NHS England's commissioning policy for percutaneous mitral valve leaflet repair for primary degenerative mitral regurgitation in adults, which was published in July 2019.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[50611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients who are eligible for percutaneous mitral valve leaflet repair for primary degenerative mitral regurgitation in any given year; and how many patients have been treated with percutaneous mitral valve leaflet repair for primary degenerative mitral regurgitation in each year since that treatment was first commissioned by the NHS.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[50612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the NHS has to commission transcatheter tricuspid valve leaflet repair routinely.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the implementation of NHS England's commissioning policy for percutaneous mitral valve leaflet repair for primary degenerative mitral regurgitation in adults. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to provide access to mitral valve leaflet repair by commissioning on an interim basis from the three National Health Service trusts that supported the clinical evaluation of this procedure. All cardiology services in England were made aware they should continue to refer patients to these centres in advance of a formal provider selection taking place.

Data submitted to the National Institute for Cardiovascular Outcomes research (NICOR) registry indicates that 94 patients in 2018 and 175 patients in 2019 had mitral valve leaflet repair. Cardiology activity and completeness of NICOR data submissions were significantly impacted during 2020 due to COVID and therefore data is incomplete for that year. Overall, NHS England and NHS Improvement estimate that 4,000 patients may be considered for the mitral valve leaflet repair procedure and approximately 400 patients would be referred for the procedure per year after five years. NHS England and NHS Improvement have no plans to commission transcatheter tricuspid valve leaflet repair.

## ■ Home Care Services: Task Forces

**Tim Farron:** [\[48180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to establish a cross-government task force on housing with care.

**Tim Farron:** [\[48181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken with Cabinet colleagues to support cross-Government working on older people's housing and care.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Government will invest in supported housing, as well as exploring other innovative housing solutions to support more people to live independently at home for longer. The Department of Health and Social Care works closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions to increase both the supply and quality of supported housing. We are engaging closely with both the sector and a range of other stakeholders including considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models such as proposals for a cross-Government taskforce.

■ **Hospices: Pay**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[49062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional funding to hospices to facilitate a 3 per cent pay rise for their caring staff in line with NHS staff pay increase.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Most hospices are independent, charitable organisations who remain free to set salary rates along with other terms and conditions at a level that reflects the skills and experience of their staff. However, the Government keeps their funding arrangements under regular review. The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to engage with the sector to understand the issues they face, including determining any funding arrangements and implications for non-National Health Service organisations providing NHS services as a result of the 3% pay uplift for NHS staff.

■ **Integrated Care Systems: Recruitment**

**John Redwood:** [\[48117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the estimated recruitment costs are for the new directors and chief executives of the Integrated Care Boards and Partnerships.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have minimised the costs of recruitment through national and regional coordination. However, the recruitment process for these posts is still ongoing and projected overall costs are not yet confirmed.

## ■ Medical Equipment and Medical Treatments: Manufacturing Industries

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[48158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to require medicine and medical device makers to declare all payments made to doctors, teaching hospitals, research institutions and charities.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government published the response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review on 26 July 2021, where we accepted in principle, the need for stronger reporting of payments made by industry to healthcare professionals and organisations. The Department continues to explore options to expand and reinforce current industry schemes, including making reporting mandatory through legislation.

## ■ Menopause: Prescriptions

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[49036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support for prescription costs is available for women experiencing the menopause.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* Women experiencing the menopause are not included in the list of people entitled to free prescriptions. Eligibility depends on having a qualifying medical condition, the patient's age, whether they are in qualifying full-time education, whether they are pregnant or have recently given birth, or whether they are in receipt of certain benefits or a war pension.

However, people on a low income who do not qualify for an exemption may be eligible for full or partial help with prescription charges through application to the NHS Low Income Scheme. People who need a number of prescriptions each month can buy a prepayment certificate which can help reduce costs significantly. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[48143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on (a) the number of children requiring mental health services in England and (b) waiting times for access to child mental health services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 16 September 2021]:* While recent estimates of the prevalence of probable mental disorders in children and young people have been made, data on how many of these will require use of mental health services is not held centrally.

No data is held on access and waiting times for children and young people's mental health services as a waiting time standard has not yet been defined.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[48359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting lists for child and adolescent mental health services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are investing an additional £79 million in 2021/22 to significantly expand children's and young people's mental health services. This will allow approximately 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services and 2,000 more to access eating disorder services as well as accelerating the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges.

We remain committed to the aim of the NHS Long Term Plan to invest at least a further £2.3 billion a year into mental health by 2023/24. This will see an additional 345,000 children and young people a year accessing National Health Service-funded mental health support. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement have consulted on the potential to introduce a new waiting time standard for children and young people presenting to community-based mental health services, to receive care within four weeks from referral. This consultation closed on 1 September 2021 and the outcomes will inform a recommendation to Government in due course on whether and how to implement this new access standard.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[49192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the £79 million NHS England allocated for children and young people's mental health support on 5 March 2021; and what that £79 million has funded, including the number of posts, in Vale of York constituency.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* No such assessment has been made. The extra £79 million has been allocated for financial year 2021/22 and the Department will be assessing its delivery and impact through monitoring of key metrics. It is for local commissioners to allocate this funding to meet the needs of children and young people in their local populations and information on the number of posts funded in the Vale of York constituency is not collected centrally

## ■ NHS: Negligence

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[43518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 88854, how much NHS Resolution spent on medication errors in the 2020-21 financial year.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The following table shows the total value of payments made by NHS Resolution for damages and legal costs in respect of medication errors in 2020/21.

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL COSTS
2020/21	£16,884,155

## ■ NHS: Reorganisation

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[48239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the overall cost of the reforms to the NHS proposed within the Health and Care Bill 2021; and how much of that cost is attributed to (a) staff redundancies, (b) IT infrastructure for new organisations, (c) estates costs of closing bodies and setting up new organisations and (d) programme management.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 16 September 2021]:* Since 2018, the National Health Service has been merging many clinical commissioning groups and formally designating areas as non-statutory integrated care systems (ICSs). Each area in England has been covered by a non-statutory ICS since 1 April 2021. We would therefore not expect significant additional costs from the Bill, which will be placing these non-statutory ICSs on a statutory footing.

In 2022/23, the NHS is planning on running costs remaining broadly the same as 2021/22. Systems will be expected to absorb any additional costs within existing budgets, including those from staff redundancies, IT infrastructure, estates costs of closing organisations and programme management. An impact assessment for the Health and Care Bill was published on 14 September 2021, which considers the financial costs of the proposed reforms.

## ■ NHS: Staff

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[49205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to ensure that there is a comprehensive workforce plan for the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

In July 2021 the Department commissioned Health Education England (HEE) to review long term strategic trends for the health and social care workforce to ensure the National Health Service has the staff with the skills, values and behaviours to deliver world leading clinical services and continued high standards of patient care.

## ■ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

**Kevin Brennan:**

[\[49963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the need for additional resources to help ensure that NHS bodies provide timely

responses to requests for information to assist investigations by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* We have made no such assessment.

#### ■ Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

**Gavin Robinson:**

[\[44360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women have had polycystic ovary syndrome in each of the last five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

This data is not held centrally.

#### ■ Social Services: Coronavirus

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[49037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance is available for non-residential social care providers not covered by mandatory covid-19 vaccination requirements.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* The Standard Operating Procedure for vaccination of frontline health and social care staff who do not work in a care home for older adults is available at the following link:

[https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/01/C1037-COVID-vacc-deployment-SOP\\_community-based-care-workers-14-January-2021.pdf](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/01/C1037-COVID-vacc-deployment-SOP_community-based-care-workers-14-January-2021.pdf)

#### ■ Social Services: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[48301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to fund the current unmet needs in the social care sector.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Local authorities are responsible for assessing individual's eligibility for care and support as set out in the Care Act 2014 and where the individual is eligible for financial support, for meeting those needs.

We have committed to investing an additional £5.4 billion over three years, which will allow us to begin a comprehensive programme of reform for adult social care. This includes major improvements to the wider social care system in England. We are also committed to ensuring local authorities have access to sustainable funding for core budgets at the Spending Review.

**■ Social Services: Older People**

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[48343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the provision of new models of social care for older people, such as housing-with-care.

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[48344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to set up a task force on housing with care.

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[48345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle loneliness among older people through (a) retirement communities and (b) other housing solutions.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Government will invest in supported housing, as well as exploring other innovative housing solutions to support more people to live independently at home for longer, with personalised care and support.

The Department of Health and Social Care works closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Work and Pensions to increase both the supply and quality of supported housing. We are engaging with both the sector and a range of other stakeholders including considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models including proposals for a cross-Government taskforce. Additionally, since the beginning of the pandemic, the Government has invested over £34 million to organisations supporting people who experience loneliness.

**Damien Moore:** [\[49258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure elderly citizens on low incomes are able to access social care.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to carry out an assessment where an adult or carer appears to have care and support needs. Once an eligibility determination has been made the local authority should then carry out a financial assessment to determine whether or not the person should pay anything towards their care.

We have announced a cap on care costs and the more generous means testing which will benefit all adults. The Government will unfreeze the Minimum Income Guarantee for those receiving care in their own homes and Personal Expenses Allowance for care home residents, which will both rise in line with inflation from April 2022.

**■ Social Services: Private Sector****Clive Lewis:** [\[48309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing conditions on the receipt of any new funding for social care by private care providers, to require that funds are spent only on care delivery.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are currently considering a range of options across Government. Further detail on all the adult social care system reform commitments will be published in a white paper later this year.

**■ Social Services: Recruitment****Rachael Maskell:** [\[49206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to address (a) recruitment and (b) retention issues in the social care sector.

**Gillian Keegan:**

A national recruitment campaign for adult social care will be launched in the autumn. We are also providing free and fast-track disclosure and barring service checks for staff recruited in response to the pandemic and the promoting of adult social care careers in Job Centres.

We will invest at least £500 million across three years in social care workforce professionalisation and development, wellbeing and mental health support, which will support retention of staff in the sector. We continue to work closely with the sector to understand how we can further support recruitment and retention.

**■ Social Services: Reform****Mr Mark Harper:** [\[45066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 35 of the policy paper, Building Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care, published in September 2021, which organisations in the social care sector the Government has consulted in the production of its adult social care white paper; and whether the Government plans to hold further consultations.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 13 September 2021]:* We will be publishing a white paper later this year with further details on our plans for reform. Engagement with the social care sector, those with lived experience and other key stakeholders is ongoing.

**■ Speech and Language Disorders: Disability Aids****Catherine West:** [\[45894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people with (a) cerebral palsy and (b) other communication needs from birth who would benefit from the use of augmentative and alternative communication



(AAC) devices; and how many with such communication needs have access to those devices and appropriate training in their use in each region.

**Catherine West:** [\[45895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people (a) with motor neurone disease, (b) suffering from stroke and (c) with other communication needs which have developed later in life who would benefit from the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices; and how many with such communication needs have access to those devices and appropriate training in their use in each region.

**Catherine West:** [\[45896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what training do qualified speech therapists receive in (a) identifying a need for and (b) assisting a user to use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication device.

**Catherine West:** [\[45897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much is allocated each year in the NHS Budget for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. provision.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Information on the number of people or by diagnosis type who would benefit from the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) services is not held centrally. NHS England and NHS Improvement commission services for patients requiring specialised assessment and/or equipment. However, the majority of patients are seen within local speech and language services. The NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioning budget for specialised AAC services is approximately £19 million.

The standard of training for health care professionals is the responsibility of the health care independent statutory regulatory bodies such as the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Health and Care Professions Council, which are independent statutory bodies. The knowledge and use of AAC forms part of the pre-registration learning curriculum for speech and language therapists.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Afghanistan: Deportation

**Hilary Benn:** [\[51593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government is currently deporting people to Afghanistan; and if she will make a statement.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Enforced returns to Afghanistan, including deportations, have been paused.

## ■ Animal Experiments

**Grahame Morris:** [\[51668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the reasons for which there were no reports of pyrogenicity testing in animals in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

**Damian Hinds:**

No such assessment of trends has been made. In most cases, pyrogenicity tests can be carried out using a combination of non-animal alternatives.

The requirements for regulatory testing are set by regulatory bodies across Government. The Home Department regulates the use of animals in science through administration and enforcement of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) which describes that the evaluation of a programme of work is favourable if it is required by law.

The Home Office assures that, in every research proposal: animals are replaced with non-animal alternatives wherever possible; the number of animals are reduced to the minimum necessary to achieve the result sought; and that, for those animals which must be used, procedures are refined as much as possible to minimise their suffering.

## ■ Animal Experiments: Chemicals

**Grahame Morris:** [\[51672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to statistical analysis by Cruelty Free International, published on 20 July 2021, what steps she is taking to reduce the 349 per cent increase in 2020 in the number of animal tests undertaken for industrial chemicals for use in household products.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office assures that, in every research proposal: animals are replaced with non-animal alternatives wherever possible; the number of animals are reduced to the minimum necessary to achieve the result sought; and that, for those animals which must be used, procedures are refined as much as possible to minimise their suffering.

The requirements for regulatory testing are set by regulatory bodies across Government. The Home Department regulates the use of animals in science through administration and enforcement of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) which describes that the evaluation of a programme of work is favourable if it is required by law.

## ■ Animal Experiments: Dogs

**Grahame Morris:** [\[51669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason there was an increase in experiments conducted on dogs for the purposes of plant protection product

legislation in 2020 from previous years; and what types of products were tested in those experiments.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office has made no assessment of the reason there was an increase in experiments conducted on dogs for the purpose of plant protection product legislation in 2020 from previous years.

The requirements for regulatory testing are set by regulatory bodies across Government. The Home Department regulates the use of animals in science through administration and enforcement of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) which describes that the evaluation of a programme of work is favourable if it is required by law.

Data were not collected on what types of products were tested in those experiments.

**Grahame Morris:** [\[51670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to publish details of the nine tests that were conducted on dogs in 2020 to satisfy industrial chemicals legislation.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office has no plans to publish the details mentioned.

The requirements for regulatory testing are set by regulatory bodies across Government. The Home Department regulates the use of animals in science through administration and enforcement of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) which describes that the evaluation of a programme of work is favourable if it is required by law.

■ **Animal Experiments: Rodents**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[51671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the correlation between the availability of non-animal alternatives and the number of skin sensitisation tests carried out on mice between 2015 and 2019; and for what reason those tests increased by 375 per cent in 2020 compared with 2019.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Home Office has made no such assessment of non-animal alternatives and the number of skin sensitisation tests carried out on mice between 2015 and 2019; and for what reason those tests increased in 2020.

The requirements for regulatory testing are set by regulatory bodies across Government. The Home Department regulates the use of animals in science through administration and enforcement of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA) which describes that the evaluation of a programme of work is favourable if it is required by law.

The Home Office assures that, in every research proposal: animals are replaced with non-animal alternatives wherever possible; the number of animals are reduced to the minimum necessary to achieve the result sought; and that, for those animals which must be used, procedures are refined as much as possible to minimise their suffering.

## ■ Asylum

**Dame Meg Hillier:** [50634]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claims are awaiting resolution as at 16 September 2021.

**Dame Meg Hillier:** [50635]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum claims have been awaiting a decision from her Department for over 12 months.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office does publish data on how many initial asylum applications are awaiting a decision and by duration, but only up to and including June 2021. This data can be found at Asy\_04 of the published Immigration Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement>

**John Spellar:** [51588]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are currently placed in each local authority in England.

**Tom Pursglove:**

We publish data on asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021>

**Afzal Khan:** [51835]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has undertaken an assessment of the potential merits of expanding safe routes to claiming asylum in the UK, including accepting asylum claims at British embassies, High Commissions or visa application centres.

**Kevin Foster:**

The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.

However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge. Whilst we sympathise with people in many difficult situations around the world, we are not bound to consider asylum claims in British Embassies, High Commissions or visa application centres abroad from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to

come here. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach, this is the fastest route to safety.

We continue to prioritise and welcome the most vulnerable refugees in need of protection identified and referred by the UNHCR through our resettlement schemes, and there are no plans to change this approach. Through these routes we have resettled more refugees than any EU country since 2015.

In addition to our resettlement schemes, there are safe and legal routes for people to come to the UK should they wish to join family members here, work or study. They would need to meet the requirements of the relevant Immigration Rule under which they were applying to qualify for a visa.

## ■ Asylum: Afghanistan

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[50018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) funding and (b) staff resources she has allocated to processing visa waivers and resettlement of Afghan citizens since the 1 July 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Staff are being deployed flexibly to ensure sufficient capacity to respond to priorities and the department will ensure that enough resource is made available to process applications.

Over 300 people in the Home Office were working toward the response to the Afghanistan crisis, this included Border Force officers in Dubai and Kabul processing visas on the ground, and staff in Homeland Security Group and UK Visas and Immigration working on shifts throughout the day and night to process security checks. Nearly 500 call agents were assigned to the helpdesk at its peak.

We continue to monitor the workload and will make changes to staffing resources as required.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[50729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that Afghan asylum seekers living in the UK are able to access immigration advice and legal representation.

**Tom Pursglove:**

All asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can escalate any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support including legal advice where appropriate.

AIRE asylum services provide free independent advice, guidance and information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[51836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department's updated country guidance on Afghanistan will be available for use in asylum claims from Afghan asylum seekers already in the UK.

**Tom Pursglove:**

We aim to publish a new country policy and information note as soon as possible.

## ■ Asylum: LGBT People

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[50777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the risk of increasing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic assault and harassment in the asylum process through the use of offshore immigration processing centres.

**Kevin Foster:**

The New Plan for Immigration seeks to build a fair, but firm asylum system, ensuring we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum. On 16 September, we published an Equality Impact Assessment for the policies being taken forward through the Nationality and Borders Bill. This includes an assessment on potential impacts on people who are LGBTQ+:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-equality-impact-assessment>

## ■ Asylum: Standards

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[50047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to clear the backlog of asylum applications, and if she will reinstate the six-month service standard for assessing asylum applications.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office is committed to ensuring asylum claims are considered without unnecessary delay.

We have already made significant progress in prioritising claims with acute vulnerability and those in receipt of the greatest level of support, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. Additionally, we are prioritising older claims and those where an individual has already received a decision, but a reconsideration is required.

The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives which will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff. We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help

build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system.

We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

Asylum Operations are working to reintroduce a service standard and will be looking towards aligning potentially with changes being brought about by the New Plan for Immigration.

### ■ **Domestic Violence: Disclosure of Information**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[51785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps is she taking to (a) standardise the use of the domestic violence disclosure scheme across police forces and (b) remove discrepancies in how likely forces are to pass on information.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Domestic Violence Disclosure System also known as 'Clare's Law' enables police to disclose information to a victim or potential victim of domestic abuse about their partner's or ex-partner's previous abusive or violent offending.

As part of the landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 we are putting the guidance on which the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is based into statute. This will place a duty on all police forces to apply the guidance unless there is good reason not to, and will strengthen the visibility and consistent operation of the scheme across England and Wales.

### ■ **Hamas: Proscribed Organisations**

**Lee Anderson:**

[\[50141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the UK's proscription of Hamas.

**Damian Hinds:**

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

### ■ **Hare Coursing**

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[51568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the scale of the threat posed to farmers by illegal hare coursing on their land, in respect of (a) personal intimidation, (b) damage to gates when forcing access and (c) risk of retaliation against vulnerable farm property, in response to intruders being challenged; what estimate she has made of the scale of the illegal betting rings involved in that criminality; and what discussions her officials have held with the Ministry of Justice on (i)

raising substantially the maximum fine from its present level of £1,000 and (ii) imposing custodial sentences on serious offenders.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This government remains committed to driving down crime in communities, including those which particularly affect rural areas such as hare coursing. Although the scale of harm associated with hare coursing is not captured centrally, this government recognises its impact, which is why we are investing in the financial and operational capabilities of the police, as well as working closely with DEFRA to develop its legislative proposals contained in its Action Plan for Animal Welfare, which will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time allows.

All decisions on sentencing is a matter for our independent courts, which upon making a decision take into account the circumstances of the offence and any aggravating and mitigating factors. Any changes to the sentencing guidelines will be a decision for the Independent Sentencing Council.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[49980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to a letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 23 July 2021, reference ZA57156 on an asylum claim.

**Kevin Foster:**

A response was sent to the hon. Member on 20 August 2021. Following a discussion with the Hon. Members office, UK Visas and Immigration provided a further response on 16 September 2021.

■ **Roads: Accidents**

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[51880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many deaths were caused on UK roads by drivers who (a) were driving without a licence, (b) had never held a driving licence and (c) had previously held a license but had been disqualified from driving broken down by age groups of those who were (i) under 17, (ii) 17 to 65 and (iii) 65 and above years old, in each of the last 20 years.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[51881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many deaths by dangerous driving occurred in each of the last twenty years; and how many and what proportion of those divers (i) had and (ii) did not have a valid driving licence.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects data on police recorded offences, including a group of offences classed as Death or serious injury – unlawful driving. These are published quarterly by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The latest figures for the year ending March 2021 can be accessed here:



<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables>

The Home Office does not collect data on the age of drivers in these offences, or the number of drivers in these offences who did not hold a valid licence at the time of the offence.

## ■ Travel: Quarantine

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [51792]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were housed in hotels in the Gatwick area under her Department's policies at the start of each of the last six months.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [51793]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of her Department's policy of housing people in hotels in the Gatwick area in each of the last six months; and if she will make a statement.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [51794]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hotels in the Gatwick area house people under her Department's policies.

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [51795]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what security clearance is required by staff working with people housed in hotels in the Gatwick area under her Department's policies.

**Kevin Foster:**

To respond to your question we have interpreted it as requiring this information for supported asylum seekers, resettled refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking minors and have provided information on that basis.

The Home Office do not routinely publish the numbers of people accommodated in hotels, or what hotels are used for accommodation, however we do publish information on the numbers of people accommodated in each local authority, which includes hotel accommodation at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021>

The Home Office considers the cost of accommodation to be commercially confidential and does not publish this information.

Staff employed by our providers working within hotels are required to have security clearance (SC) and a DBS check. Those staff who are employed by the hotel do not require security clearance unless their employers have clearance within their terms & conditions.

**■ Visits Abroad: Greek Islands****Bambos Charalambous:** [\[51802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the reason was for (a) her visit to the construction site of the Multi Purpose Reception and Identification Centre (MPRIC) on the island of Samos, Greece in August 2021 and (b) the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's visit to the MPRIC construction site in May 2021; and whether her Department plans to construct a similar facility in the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

We regularly engage with Greek ministers and senior officials on the challenges presented by the migration situation in Greece. This includes fact finding visits, to better understand and assess the approach being taken by the Greek Government in its response to the challenge from illegal migration.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Firearms: Colombia****Emily Thornberry:** [\[51632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Strategic Export Controls: Country Pivot Report 1 January 2020 - 31 December 2020 published in July 2021, which (a) companies, (b) individuals and (c) others were end user or users of machine gun components for which Colombia-specific OIELs were issued.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

In 2020, one such Open Individual Export Licence was granted, for specific use by the Brazilian Navy in the maintenance and repair of their fleet while in port in Colombia.

**■ Forced Labour****Ms Nusrat Ghani:** [\[51740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 23243 on Forced Labour, what progress has been made on convening a technical discussion with G7 partners to share data and evidence and develop recommendations based on best practices to prevent, identify, and eliminate forced labour in global supply chains.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Department for International Trade officials convened a technical discussion with G7 partners on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September to share data, evidence and develop recommendations based on best practices to prevent, identify, and eliminate forced labour in global supply chains. Experts from international and domestic organisations and the United Kingdom's Modern Slavery Envoy were invited to identify challenges and opportunities for governments. G7 members shared their respective best

practices and identified areas for strengthened cooperation. G7 Trade Ministers will discuss the recommendations when they meet in October.

### ■ **Forced Labour: Xinjiang**

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

[\[51737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking in response to President Ursula von der Leyen's State of the Union 2021 address in which she said that the EU will propose a ban on products on its market that have been made with forced labour; and what steps she plans to take to work with President von der Leyen to help ensure that products made by force labour from Xinjiang are not sold in the UK.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government continues to keep its policy response to goods produced using forced labour under close review. We are working closely with our international partners, through the G7 trade track to ensure that global supply chains are free from the use of forced labour. G7 Trade Ministers will aim to identify areas for strengthened cooperation and collective action towards the eradication of forced labour in global supply chains in October.

### ■ **Overseas Trade: China**

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

[\[51739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2021 to Question 28243 on Overseas Trade: China, whether her Department plans to begin discussions on (a) state-to-state trade or (b) a Sino-British Investment deal with China while that country maintains sanctions on hon. Members, British lawyers and British academics.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government has no plans to negotiate a trade deal with China. We do not have dates for the next United Kingdom-China Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO), which is our long-established trade dialogue with China.

## JUSTICE

### ■ **Crime: Wales**

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[51612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government on producing disaggregated criminal justice data for Wales.

**James Cartlidge:**

The then Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice was due to discuss data and other issues with the Counsel General for Wales on 16 September, but the



## VOLUME OF PROVIDERS (FIRMS)

Family	1,557	1,507	1,352	1,269	1,211	1,160	1,090	1,003	1,029	992	959	937
Clinical Negligence	169	166	166	156	142	107	106	100	100	99	95	93
Mental Health	172	171	168	160	176	169	158	147	156	147	135	135
Public Law	87	85	83	79	74	92	89	84	110	99	95	95
Welfare Benefits	286	274	0	14	15	15	16	14	52	41	38	36

## Volume of Offices

Category of Law	Apr-12	Sep-12	Apr-13	Apr-14	Apr-15	Apr-16	Apr-17	Apr-18	Apr-19	Apr-20	Apr-21	Sep-21
Claims Against the Public Authorities	83	82	79	74	72	80	80	78	119	112	104	101
Community Care	140	139	131	115	163	142	136	124	146	137	129	127
Discrimination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	22	21
Education	28	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	22	19
Housing and Debt	537	524	710	652	606	560	525	475	480	436	407	397
Immigration Asylum	228	224	405	376	323	285	262	229	303	281	263	257
Immigration Other*	229	225										
Family	2,328	2,273	2,254	2,134	2,001	1,890	1,732	1,616	1,713	1,654	1,575	1,537
Clinical Negligence	291	285	285	267	248	196	191	180	175	170	164	159
Mental Health	193	192	189	179	200	189	173	161	181	172	159	157
Public Law	111	108	107	101	95	111	108	102	155	141	130	130
Welfare Benefits	364	353	0	13	15	14	15	13	50	39	36	34

\*ceased as separate category

## ■ Offences against Children: Sentencing

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[50792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will undertake a review of sentencing guidelines for defendants convicted of sexual offences against minors.

**James Cartlidge:**

Sentencing guidelines are developed by the Sentencing Council for England and Wales, which is independent of Parliament and Government.

The Sentencing Council recently consulted on revisions to its child sexual offences sentencing guidelines, which set out the approach courts should take when sentencing cases where no sexual activity takes place or the targeted child does not exist, for instance in police sting operations, as well as a new guideline for the offence of sexual communication with a child. The Council is currently analysing responses to the consultation, and it is anticipated that revised versions of the guidelines will be published next year.

## ■ Remand in Custody: Children and Young People

**Anna McMorrin:**

[\[51803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish his Department's review of youth custodial remand.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Ministry of Justice committed to look into the use of custodial remand for youth following a recommendation by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

My officials have concluded the engagement and data collection stages of the review; its conclusions and our next steps will be published in due course.

The Government is already taking action to improve the remand framework and process. The proposals in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will strengthen the tests applied by the courts to ensure children are only remanded to custody as a last resort and will require courts to record their reasons for any custodial remand.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ Business: Air Conditioning and Ventilation

**Steve Reed:**

[\[51712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he has made an estimate of the number of local authorities in England that are providing guidance to businesses on the installation of new ventilation and air-conditioning systems.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department does not hold this information.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides guidance to employers on [ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#) which local authorities may use as part of their communications and engagement with local organisations.

**Elections: Proof of Identity****Cat Smith:**[\[48273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department has appointed a voter ID implementation lead, or equivalent role, in the last three months.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Elections Bill will update elections law and deliver on a number of manifesto commitments to protect our democracy, and ensure that it remains secure, modern, transparent and fair.

The Electoral Integrity Programme is running projects to support the successful implementation of the changes created by the Elections Bill.

We continue to work with local authorities, the Electoral Commission, charities and civil society organisations to make sure that reforms are delivered in a way that is inclusive for all voters.

**Catherine West:**[\[48319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2021 to Question 28276 on Elections: Proof of Identity, what steps he is taking to make blind and partially sighted people aware that they are entitled to a Voter Card to enable them to vote.

**Catherine West:**[\[48320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2021 to Question 28276, Elections: Proof of Identity, what steps he is taking to ensure that the application process for voter cards is fully accessible to blind and partially sighted people.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

It is important to be clear that a Voter Card will only be necessary where electors do not already possess one of the wide range of forms of identification that will be acceptable. Many blind and partially sighted people who choose to vote in person will likely find they already possess such a form of identification. However, where electors do not possess this, local authorities will be legally obliged to provide a Voter Card free of charge.

We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders, including the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and a wide range of charities

and civil society organisations, to make sure that the requirement to provide photographic identification at the polling station is rolled out in a way that is inclusive for all voters.

This will include continued engagement with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), which is a member of the Government's expert Accessibility of Elections Working Group.

## ■ Homelessness and Housing

**Conor McGinn:** [\[51736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impact on (a) retention and (b) morale of local authority staff delivering homelessness and housing support services of the Government's decision to fund those provisions on a year-by-year basis rather than through a long-term settlement.

**Eddie Hughes:**

I would like to personally thank all the housing and homelessness staff in local authorities who have worked so tirelessly during the pandemic and before to support some of the most vulnerable in our society. The Government is committed to tackling homelessness. We are spending more than £750 million this year alone to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This includes £310 million through the Homelessness Prevention Grant to help local authorities prevent and manage homelessness pressures. Future funding is a matter for the Spending Review.

## ■ Local Government: Recruitment

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:** [\[49184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle potential staffing shortages that local authorities face in the recruitment of (a) senior planning staff and (b) other planning and housing specialists.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We are considering the responses to the Planning for the Future consultation and will be publishing our response.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[50721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to take steps with local authorities to develop workforce plans to help ensure that they are able to recruit staff with the skills they need, including in their works departments, to support communities.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Local authorities are independent employers, accountable to local people. They are responsible for their own workforce arrangements. The department does not have a



national workforce plan for local government but offers a range of support to help build a sustainable, resilient sector.

## ■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Flags**

**Justin Madders:** [\[50690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Since 2019 the Department have purchased flags from Flagmakers, a division of Specialist Canvas Services Ltd; 21st Century Office Concepts Ltd trading as Cupaz; and Harrison Flagpoles.

**Justin Madders:** [\[50691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many and what proportion of the Union Jack flags purchased by his Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Four Union Jack flags have been purchased during this time, but the Department does not hold information on where the flags were manufactured.

## ■ **Planning Permission**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[50144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will update the National Planning Policy Framework to remove the ability of the Planning Inspectorate to use the housing standard methodology calculation when (a) assessing local plans and (b) deciding planning appeals.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The standard housing need methodology plays an important role in enabling local authorities to identify and plan to meet their housing needs - it should be taken into account in drawing up and assessing local plans, and is a material consideration in deciding planning applications and appeals.

We are considering the responses to the Planning for the Future consultation and will publish our response.

## ■ **Platinum Jubilee 2022**

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** [\[51572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to issue instructions to local authorities on easements and waivers to enable street parties to mark HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Street parties guidance is currently available on the government website. The 'how to' guide outlining how best to prepare for street parties and other public events related to Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will shortly be updated. My department will be writing to councils in due course to highlight some of the opportunities for councils and their communities to take part in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. In the letter we will include further details and advice on road closures.

**Property Development: Land****Ms Nusrat Ghani:**[\[49182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will consider providing step-in rights for local authorities to take control of the land to support development in their area.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is clear that new homes should be built out as soon as possible once planning permission is granted. Where build-out is delayed, it is for councils and developers to work closely together to overcome any barriers.

Local authorities have various compulsory purchase powers they can use to acquire land, including for the delivery of new housing. These are intended as a last resort and there must always be a compelling case in the public interest to justify intervention. Government is keen to encourage local authorities to make more effective use of compulsory purchase powers and we will continue to explore ways of supporting them in doing so.

**Regional Planning and Development****Anne Marie Morris:**[\[51704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his Department's working definition of levelling up is.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Levelling up is about improving living standards and unleashing enterprise and growth across all parts of the UK. It is about increasing and spreading access to opportunity, because while potential is evenly distributed, opportunity isn't. It is about making peoples' lives better by improving public services, strengthening community, restoring pride in place, and improving quality of life in ways that are not just about the economy. And it is about empowering local leaders and communities. As the Prime Minister set out in his speech on the 15 July 2021, the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper this autumn will set out further details.

**Regional Planning and Development: Finance****Patricia Gibson:**[\[51733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when the first round of successful applications for Levelling Up funding will be announced.

**Neil O'Brien:**

I am delighted to say that the first round of the Levelling Up Fund received significant interest. Bids are currently being assessed in line with the published assessment process. Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund will be announced and bidding authorities informed in due course.

**Sheltered Housing****Stephen Timms:**[\[49019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department plans to take with the Department of Health and Social Care to expand housing options that include social care provision.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Offering vulnerable people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently and feel more connected to their communities. Housing-with-care allows individuals to choose where they want to live, with whom, how they can best be supported, and what happens in their home. Both the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities and the Department of Health and Social Care provide capital funding to incentivise their supply.

We are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, where 10 per cent of delivery over the course of the programme will be used to increase the supply of much needed specialist or supported housing, including retirement housing. The Department of Health and Social Care are also continuing to subsidise new supply of specialist housing for older and disabled people through the Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) Fund.

The Government's plan for health and social care, announced on Tuesday 7 September, also recognised the important role of housing, and supported housing in particular, in providing care and support to people in the community.

**Vagrancy Act 1824****Paul Maynard:**[\[49984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to publish the response to the consultation on the review of the Vagrancy Act 1824.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government is clear that no one should be criminalised simply for having nowhere to live and the time has come to reconsider the Vagrancy Act.

Work is ongoing to look at this complex issue and it is important that we look carefully at all options.

We will update on our findings in due course.

## ■ Visual Impairment: Voting Methods

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[51854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Elections Bill, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on a blind or partially sighted voter of a decision by a Returning Officer that a tactile voting device is not reasonable to provide in a polling station.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

It is integral to our democracy that everybody is able to make their voice heard and that elections are accessible for all those eligible to vote.

This is why, for the first time in electoral law, through the Elections Bill, we are putting in place a requirement for Returning Officers to consider the needs of all disabled voters when providing equipment for polling stations.

This will allow Returning Officers to tailor the package of equipment they offer to their voters to take into account developments in equipment and technology, in order to best meet the needs of people with disabilities. The tactile voting device is a well-established element of the support in place for voters with disabilities and Returning Officers will be well-placed to understand how it can be deployed to best effect to support voters in their areas.

Clear guidance will be issued to Returning Officers by the Electoral Commission, which will be produced in partnership with the Government's expert Accessibility of Elections Working Group, which includes a wide range of stakeholders such as the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ A1: Brownieside

**Bill Wiggin:**

[\[49041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the pioneering technology used in 2016 by Highways England's contractors to resurface the A1 at Brownieside continues to be utilised.

**Trudy Harrison:**

This technology is still being utilised by National Highways (formerly Highways England) where it is thought to be the most suitable for the project in question. It has been used on 6 different schemes within the Yorkshire and North East region since the original trial in 2016.

## ■ Bridges and Tunnels: Northern Ireland and Scotland

**Claire Hanna:** [\[50780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much the Government spent on studies to examine the feasibility of building a bridge or tunnel between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Fixed Link Feasibility Study forms part of the Union Connectivity Review, independently chaired by Sir Peter Hendy CBE. Sir Peter's review has not yet concluded, so the final figure is not yet available.

## ■ Department for Transport: Flags

**Justin Madders:** [\[50063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

**Justin Madders:** [\[50064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of Union Jack flags purchased by his Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

During the last two financial years the Department for Transport purchased 6 Union flags. The flags were purchased from a supplier (Flags and Flag Poles) based in the UK. Information is not recorded on the country of manufacture.

## ■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Staff

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[50129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff currently work for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

**Trudy Harrison:**

On 16 September 2021 the total headcount at the DVLA was 6,120.

## ■ Driving Tests

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[51864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test centres have an available appointment for a practical driving test available within the next six weeks; and how many appointments are available within the next six weeks at those centres which do have available appointments.

**Trudy Harrison:**

There are 146 driving test centres (DTC) that have at least one car test available within the next six weeks. A total of 741 tests are available within six weeks at those DTCs.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[51865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of learner drivers who have had to resit their driving theory tests as a result of the shortage of practical driving test appointment availability.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The maximum duration of two years between passing the theory test and a subsequent practical test is in place to ensure a candidate's road safety knowledge and ability to identify developing hazards is current. This validity period is set in legislation and the Government has no current plans to lay further legislation to extend it.

It is not possible to estimate how many candidates have had to re-sit their driving theory test as a result of practical driving test appointment availability.

## ■ **Driving: Insurance and Driving Licences**

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[51883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of drivers on the roads without the required (a) licence (b) insurance.

**Trudy Harrison:**

When the police stop a vehicle then a driving licence check is a routine enquiry which they can make. If the police have reasonable grounds to suspect someone of driving a vehicle not in accordance with their driving licence, or without insurance then a vehicle may be seized.

Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) has enabled action to be taken against those who keep a vehicle without insurance. CIE allows uninsured vehicles to be identified from a comparison of the DVLA's vehicle register and the Motor Insurance Database of insurance policies managed by the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB). Keepers of vehicles which appear to be uninsured are sent reminder letters. Those who take no action receive a fixed penalty of £100, followed by enforcement action including prosecution. Since CIE's introduction in 2011, uninsured vehicles have fallen from 1.4 million to 1 million.

It supplements enforcement action by the police on the road, where from 2005 police have had the power to seize vehicles that are being driven without insurance.

## ■ **Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Instruction**

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[51747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) businesses delivering B+E category drivers licence training and (b) people employed delivering that training.

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[51748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing compensation for businesses for lost revenue as a result of the ending of B+E licence testing on 20 September 2021.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The heavy goods vehicle driver shortage is well documented and the Government has been considering a range of measures that will help the industry recover from the pandemic.

The Department and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) will continue to encourage people who want to drive a car and trailer to get professional training with providers to promote road safety and help support those businesses.

The DVSA is exploring options for an industry-led accreditation that could offer a standardised non-statutory testing approach, and is engaging with key stakeholders, trainers and insurers, to discuss this issue.

The DVSA is also in discussions with the training industry to understand their capacity to deliver the off-road manoeuvres element of the vocational test and will work with them to develop a robust and clear process by which to assess, accredit and audit any trainers who wish to assess the manoeuvres element of the test.

The DVSA is establishing a new business manager role to work with vocational trainers as a local contact to better understand their current and future needs. This will help the agency to be more responsive to vocational trainers needs and help support businesses and people employed to deliver training.

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[51749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of supporting instructors approved by the National Register of LGV Instructors to become DVSA-approved assessors for off-road LGV testing elements.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The heavy goods vehicle driver shortage is well documented and the Government has been considering a range of measures that will help the industry recover from the pandemic.

The Government has announced that the time allocated for a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) and passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) driving test will be reduced, by removing the 'reversing exercise' element and 'uncouple/ recouple' element for vehicles with trailers and instead having them tested separately by the driver training industry. This part of the test is carried out off the road on a manoeuvring area.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is in discussions with the training industry to understand their capacity to deliver this part of the test. It will also work with them to develop a robust and clear process by which to assess, accredit and audit any trainers who wish to assess the manoeuvres element of the test. Testing

such manoeuvres separately will free up examiner time, meaning an increase to the number of tests an examiner conducts per day.

The DVSA takes its commitment to road safety extremely seriously and it will work with the industry and stakeholders to drive forward the importance of safe driving and safe towing. These changes will not change the standard of driving required to drive a HGV, with road safety continuing to be of paramount importance. Any driver who does not demonstrate utmost competence will not be granted a licence.

### ■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences

**Ben Bradley:**

[\[51825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of reinstating HGV licences for drivers who have recently retired to help support key industries experiencing driver shortages.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government takes road safety very seriously and the UK has some of the safest roads in the world. It is important that drivers with Category C and C+E entitlement on their driving licences fully meet the requirements for those returning to HGV driving. This includes a driver medical and renewing their Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC).

A joint DfT/industry letter will be sent to HGV licence holders this week to encourage those who have left the profession to return.

### ■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[51010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is offering to car and trailer test (categories B and E) providers affected by changes to driving test requirements for HGV drivers.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government takes road safety very seriously and the UK has some of the safest roads in the world. Therefore, the Government will explore options for an industry-led accreditation that could offer a standardised non-statutory training approach. We plan to meet with key stakeholders including trainers and insurers to discuss this idea.

### ■ Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[51882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring people to enter their (a) date of birth and (b) driving licence number when transferring ownership of a car in V5 documentation.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The vehicle registration certificate already allows motorists to voluntarily enter the new keeper's date of birth and driving licence number when advising the Driver and



Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) or a change of keeper. There are no plans to make this a requirement.

## ■ Roads: Freight

**Tim Farron:** [\[50966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many meetings (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have had with the haulage industry since the beginning of 2021.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Secretary of State for Transport has met with representatives of the road haulage industry five times during 2021.

Transport Ministers have also held an additional thirteen meetings with the haulage industry in 2021. This includes a roundtable on addressing the driver shortage jointly held by Minister for Transport Baroness Vere and Employment Minister, Mims Davies MP.

In addition to these meetings, representatives of the road haulage industry meet with Departmental officials on a biweekly basis.

**Christine Jardine:** [\[51805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the end of freedom of movement on the haulage industry; and what steps the Government is taking to tackle HGV driver shortages.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the UK and the EU delivers a good outcome for UK-based international hauliers. The vast majority of journeys to and from the EU will be able to continue without the need for any additional permits, and UK hauliers also retain rights to do work within and between EU Member States, again with no extra bureaucracy.

UK hauliers will, of course, have to ensure that they comply with the immigration rules applied by EU Member States. The rules for British Citizens taking up work or providing a service in the EU will depend on the rules in individual EU Member States, as some Member States may require a visa and/or work permit from British Citizens intending to work or to provide a service there.

The Department for Transport is working across Government and with the road haulage industry to address the current HGV driver shortage, which is an issue affecting many countries worldwide. For example, the International Road Transport Union predicts a gap of 185,000 drivers by 2027 in Germany.

The Government has already taken firm action, including through training for jobseekers, additional funding for apprenticeships, and taking measures to increase lorry driver testing capacity to bring new drivers into the industry as soon as possible.

**■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[49968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria must be fulfilled for Pakistan to be moved from the covid-19 red list to the amber list to allow non-essential travel to resume.

**Robert Courts:**

Decisions on red list assignment and associated border measures are taken by Ministers, who take into account Joint Biosecurity Centre risk assessments of countries and territories, alongside wider public health factors.

Pakistan was removed from the red list from 4am on Wednesday 22 September.

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** [\[51573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons South Africa has been retained on the Covid-19 travel red list.

**Robert Courts:**

South Africa was added to the red list on 24 December 2020 and remains on the red list as the country presents a high public health risk to the UK from known variants of concern.

**TREASURY****■ British Nationals Abroad: Electoral Register****Patrick Grady:** [\[51721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens registered as overseas electors who have been liable for (a) UK Income Tax and (b) UK Capital Gains Tax in each of the last five financial years.

**Patrick Grady:** [\[51722\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the total tax receipts paid to the UK Exchequer by UK citizens registered as overseas electors in each of the last five financial years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

No estimate has been made of the information requested. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) cannot identify individuals registered as overseas electors within tax data.

**■ Cooperatives****Steve Reed:** [\[51714\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what figures his Department holds on the amount spent by local authorities in England on helping to set up new business co-operatives.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises the value of co-operatives. It is clear they offer a different way of running a business, supporting the needs of their members and their local communities.

HMT does not hold any data regarding the amount spent by local authorities in England on helping to set up new business co-operatives. Local authorities in England have significant freedoms to choose what investments to make and how to finance them.

**Fuels: Excise Duties****Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[51885\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what forecast he has made of the level of revenues from fuel duties for each of the next five years.

**Helen Whately:**

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published its fuel duties forecast up to and including 2025-26, as part of its *Economic and fiscal outlook* in March 2021. This set out that fuel duties are estimated to reach £26.0bn in 2021-22, £29.2bn in 2022-23, £30.1bn in 2023-24, £30.6bn in 2024-25 and £31.2bn in 2025-26.

An updated forecast is expected to be published by the OBR on Wednesday 27 October.

**Health and Social Care Levy****Rachael Maskell:**[\[50095\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an estimate of the number of people who were ineligible for Government covid-19 support and who will be subject to the Health and Social Care Levy.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK.

To do this the Government has put in place an economic package of support totalling over £350 billion, including through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and a wide range of other support, such as loan schemes, business grants, business rates relief, VAT relief, mortgage holidays, and increased welfare support.

The Health and Social Care Levy Bill recently passed through the Commons. The Bill introduces a new, UK-wide 1.25 per cent ringfenced Health and Social Care Levy based on National Insurance Contributions (NICs) and paid by employers, employees and the self-employed. The Levy will be introduced from April 2022.

This Levy together with the equivalent increase in dividend tax rates will make available an additional £12 billion a year for the NHS and social care.

## ■ National Insurance

**Owen Thompson:** [\[51774\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to review the planned increase to National Insurance in response to the increase in inflation to 3.2 per cent.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The government currently has no plans to review the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy.

## ■ Standard of Living

**Owen Thompson:** [\[51773\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the increase in inflation to 3.2 per cent on living standards.

**John Glen:**

CPI inflation in August was 3.2% having risen from low levels last year. The Bank of England expects the increase in inflation to be temporary, with inflation returning to its 2% target level through 2022 and 2023.

Since the operationally independent Bank of England took on responsibility for inflation, it has averaged around the 2% target. The Government remains committed to price stability.

We understand that higher prices increase the costs of living, and that is why this Government has taken direct action to help people manage the cost of living by increasing the National Living Wage, taken action on the cost of fuel and energy bills and increasing the Local Housing Allowance.

## ■ UK Trade with EU

**Hilary Benn:** [\[51594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49030 on UK Trade with EU, what proportion of importers of non-controlled goods from the EU have chosen to delay the submission of their customs declarations since 1 January 2021 up to the latest available date.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Ordinarily only traders or their agents who are authorised to use the simplified customs declaration process (SCDP), which allows them to make the declaration in their own records, can delay making a customs declaration to HMRC (and then only until the fourth working day of the following month). However, until 31 December 2021 most importers of non-controlled goods from the EU can choose to delay the submission of their customs declarations to HMRC for up to 175 days after import as part of the staged approach to customs controls (SCC).

HMRC's understanding to date is that overall use of delayed declarations (whether under SCDP or as part of SCC) in 2021 so far has been high.

HMRC is receiving broadly the volume of declarations expected, and where declarations are being delayed, they are typically being submitted well within the 175-day window permitted by staged customs controls.

HMRC continues to monitor declarations closely, as well as supporting traders to prepare for the ending of staged customs controls delayed declarations on 1 January.

## ■ Wines: Excise Duties

**Virginia Crosbie:** [\[51896\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to introduce a small wine producers duty relief for small vineyards in the UK similar to the small brewers relief.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is considering the merits of extending small producer reliefs to other categories as part of its alcohol duty review. Further updates will be provided in our response to the alcohol duty review call for evidence in due course.

## ■ Workplace Pensions

**Stephen Timms:** [\[51578\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what changes HMRC made to the process for registering occupational pension schemes in (a) 2006 and (b) 2014; and what the reasons were for those changes .

**John Glen:**

HMRC is responsible for registering pension schemes where they wish to benefit from the tax reliefs available to pensions.

As a result of pension tax simplification, pension scheme registration was moved to a new online digital system in 2006.

As part of a wider government response to concerns surrounding pension scams, in 2014 legislation was introduced to enable HMRC to refuse registration where the scheme administrators were not considered to be fit and proper.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Disability

**Justin Madders:** [\[45863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions officials of the Cabinet Office Disability Unit have had with representatives of the British Standards Institute on its development of a public information symbol to support disabled people with non-visible disabilities.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Cabinet Office Disability Unit joined discussions between 2019 and 2020 involving BSI and other stakeholders to consider the development of a new non-visible disability sign.

**Energy: Prices****Helen Hayes:**[\[51787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in the context of the potential increase in energy bills, what steps she is taking to help ensure that (a) universal credit and (b) legacy benefit claimants will be able to afford heating over winter 2021.

**Guy Opperman:**

Working age benefits, which include legacy benefits, were increased by £1bn (1.7 per cent) from April 2020 and received a further £500m (0.5 per cent) increase from April 2021 as part of the Government's annual up-rating exercise (both figures in cash terms).

DWP also provides support to help meet the additional costs of heating through the Cold Weather Payment and Winter Fuel Payment schemes.

The Cold Weather Payment scheme helps vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet the additional costs of heating during periods of severe cold weather. Cold Weather Payments are targeted at those in receipt of eligible benefits with a pension element or disability component or where there is a child under five in the household.

Under the Winter Fuel Payment scheme, somebody who has reached State Pension Age and is under age 80 will receive £200 to help pay heating bills; rising to £300 for households with somebody aged 80 and over. This is a significant contribution towards a household's winter fuel bill.

The Warm Home Discount administered by BEIS also provides short-term support with energy bills through rebates, helping households stay warm and healthy in winter. The Warm Home Discount scheme currently provides over 2 million low-income and vulnerable households with a £140 rebate off their winter energy bill. Warm Home Discount funding for the 2021/22 year is worth £354m.

**Pension Credit****Catherine West:**[\[52561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that all eligible pensioners receive pension credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

Around 1.4 million eligible pensioners across Great Britain receive some £5 billion in Pension Credit which tops up their retirement income and is a passport to other financial help such as support with housing costs, council tax, heating bills and a free TV licence for those over 75.

On 16 June as part of a media day of action on Pension Credit, DWP joined forces with Age UK as well as the BBC to help reach, via national and local media, older people who may be reticent about claiming it. More recently, on 7 September, I met the BBC Director General to discuss other opportunities to work together to get information about Pension Credit to pensioners and their family members. We have also set up a working group including organisations such as Age UK, Independent Age, the BBC and British Telecom to explore innovative ways to reach eligible pensioners.

Earlier this year, over 11 million pensioners in Great Britain received information about Pension Credit in the leaflet accompanying their annual State Pension updating letter. They will do so again next year.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment

**Helen Hayes:**

**[50108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she made of the change in average waiting time for decision on personal independence payments (a) applications and (b) appeals.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* We are committed to ensuring that people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in a timely manner and reducing customer journey times for PIP claimants is a priority for the Department. We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to review all available evidence.

Processing times can vary reflecting factors including customer demand, operational resource and timescales for different parts of the process. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused distortion and work is ongoing to manage the recovery. This includes allowing a longer deadline for return of the PIP2 questionnaire for claims made between late February and late May 2021; these claims have now started to reach clearance.

Processing times for new PIP claims in July 2021 (most recent data available) are similar to levels a year ago.

The latest published statistics show that the waiting time for PIP appeals has come down: the average waiting time for PIP Tribunals in April to June 2021 was 27 weeks, a decrease of 4 weeks compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

In the vast majority of PIP cases DWP makes the right decision, meaning they never go to appeal, and through recent improvements to our decision-making we are ensuring that disabled people get all the support they are entitled to as quickly as possible. DWP and HMCTS, who administer social security appeals, continue to work together to reduce the length of time it takes for appeals to be heard. Where appeals are made, waiting times generally can fluctuate temporarily and geographically, owing to a number of variable factors, including volumes of benefit decisions made locally, availability of medical/disability members, venue capacity and the complexity

of the issue in dispute. Any disparity in waiting times is monitored and investigated locally.

**Marion Fellows:** [50698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) challenges and (b) merits of personal independence payment phone assessments.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* During the coronavirus pandemic, we carried out assessments by telephone as a temporary measure. The feedback on telephone assessments has so far been positive: in a recent survey published by the Department, the majority of people who had a telephone assessment for PIP or for their WCA were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'.

In Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper, we are consulting on the use of telephone and video assessments as an alternative to face-to-face in the future and want to fully evaluate their effectiveness. We have asked for views about the different ways to provide assessments, and how to improve telephone assessments to ensure they are as accurate and effective as possible. It is important that people continue to receive consistent and accurate decisions irrespective of the type of assessment they go through.

DWP Survey results of claimants who have received a telephone assessment are published here: [Claimant experience of telephone-based health assessments for PIP, ESA and UC - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/claimant-experience-of-telephone-based-health-assessments-for-PIP-ESA-and-UC)

**Marion Fellows:** [50699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to provide personal independence payment claimants with a choice of being assessed by phone or face-to-face; and if her Department will take steps to help ensure that claimants can make an informed choice about how they would prefer to be assessed.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* In Shaping Future Support: The Health & Disability Green Paper, we are consulting on the use of telephone and video assessments as an alternative to face-to-face in the future. We have asked for views about the different ways to provide assessments, and how to improve telephone assessments to ensure they are as accurate and effective as possible.

**Marion Fellows:** [50704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of personal independence claimants had their award changed at mandatory reconsideration stage following (a) an assessment by phone and (b) a face-to-face assessment between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.



**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* The specific information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost. Telephone assessments were not used before late March 2020. For the two providers of medical assessments this was on 23 rd March 2020 (Capita) and 6 th April 2020 (IAS) respectively. Therefore, the vast majority of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments for 2019-20 would have been face-to-face, with some paper based assessments.

The available information on PIP Mandatory Reconsiderations (MRs) and appeals in relation to Personal Independence Payment is published here:

[Personal Independence Payment statistics to July 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-statistics-to-july-2021)

**Drew Hendry:****[50998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is for personal independence payment claims to be reviewed by a Health Professional prior to determining the best method for undertaking an assessment in the most recent period for which figures are available; and whether that waiting time has met her Department's targets set for that process.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 22 September 2021]:* The information requested is not available.

It might be helpful if I explain that on receipt of a referral, a Health Professional (HP) will review each case along with any additional information provided by the claimant. If there is enough paper-based evidence to determine entitlement, the HP will assess the claimant on this evidence alone. If there is not, the HP may request further medical evidence from a treating medical professional. Once all the information has been received, the HP may be able to provide a paper-based assessment. If they cannot, the HP will advise on the appropriateness of a telephone, video or face to face assessment, and an assessment will be scheduled with the claimant as soon as possible.

Both DWP and its providers remain committed to ensuring claimants receive an efficient service, and takes all steps possible to ensure claimants are assessed in the most efficient way possible.

**■ Personal Independence Payment: Scotland****Drew Hendry:****[50997]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the average waiting time to process personal independence payment applications in (a) Scotland and (b) the Highlands.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 22 September 2021]:* We are committed to ensuring that people can access financial support through Personal In-dependence Payment (PIP) in a timely manner and reducing customer journey times for PIP claimants is a priority for the

Department. We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to review all available evidence.

Average waiting times for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) new claims made under normal rules (i.e. excluding those processed under special rules) are calculated as the median number of weeks from registration to DWP decision, and published as the "Average Actual Clearance Time". For claims cleared in July 2021, the latest data shows:

- (a) The Average Actual Clearance Time for new claims in Scotland was 26 weeks.
- (b) The Average Actual Clearance Time for new claims in the Highlands Local Authority was 28 weeks.

Notes:

Data Source: PIP Atomic Data Store (ADS)

- Data for the Highlands Local Authority is unpublished. It should be used with caution as there is likely to be more variability in clearance times at small geographical levels. It may be subject to future revision.
- The status of claims as 'normal rules' and 'new claim' is shown as at the point of the DWP decision, in accordance with the measure. It is possible for claims to transition between normal and special rules, and between new claims and reassessments, during the course of the claimant journey.
- Clearance time measures do not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP prior to referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria).
- The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases (e.g. cases where the person has been hard to reach due to being in prison, hospital, failed to attend the assessment on numerous occasions etc.).

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[51734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date her Department received the final report of the NatCen research project entitled The uses of health and disability benefits; and for what reason that report has not been published.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the honourable member to the answer given to [43382](#).

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Debbie Abrahams:**

[\[51701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who have applied for the new state pension and reached qualification age in (a) June, (b) July and (c) August 2021 are awaiting their initial payment.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is only available at disproportionate cost to The Department for Work and Pensions.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[52521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the length of time between people reaching State Pension age and receiving their first State Pension payment in each of the last three months.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP is aware that a small number of new State Pension claims have been subject to delays in receiving payment.

The Department is working hard to clear the current backlog, many of which have accrued since the Covid Pandemic.

We are prioritising overdue payments and payments that are imminent within the next few weeks. Normal service will be resumed by the end of October 2021.

Claimants don't need to act, we have identified the cases and will process them as soon as possible.

## ■ Universal Credit: North West

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[49179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect on poverty levels in (a) St Helens North constituency, (b) Liverpool City region and (c) the North West of the decision to remove the £20 uplift on universal credit from October 2021.

**David Rutley:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the £20 uplift on poverty or related issues. This is particularly the case at the moment given the uncertainty around the speed of the economic recovery, and how this will be distributed across the population.

The latest poverty figures (2019/20) demonstrate that absolute poverty rates (both before and after housing costs) for working-age adults in working families have fallen since 2009/10. In 2019/20, 8% of working age adults in working families were in absolute poverty (before housing costs), compared to 9% in 2009/10.

This government prefers to look at absolute poverty over Relative poverty as relative poverty can provide counter-intuitive results. Relative poverty is likely to fall during

recessions, due to falling median incomes. Under this measure, poverty can decrease even if people are getting poorer. The absolute poverty line is fixed in real terms, so will only ever worsen if people are getting poorer, and only ever improve if people are getting richer.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; Restart, which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year; and JETS, which provides light touch employment support for people who are claiming either Universal Credit or New Style Jobseekers Allowance, for up to 6 months, helping participants effectively re-engage with the labour market and focus their job search. We have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job. In total, our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

#### ■ Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme

**Kirsty Blackman:**

[\[49157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of the 27 claims made to the Vaccine Damages Payment Scheme on behalf of deceased individuals who received a covid-19 vaccination have concluded.

**Chloe Smith:**

Currently no claims on behalf of deceased individuals who received a covid-19 vaccination have concluded.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business Update – Employment Rights

**Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully):** [\[HCWS303\]](#)

The Government has today published a consultation on flexible working and the response to our consultation on a new right to time away from work for unpaid carers. These deliver on commitments in our Manifesto and are an important part of our drive to build back better after the pandemic, deliver for working families by helping people to access and stay in work, and improve business productivity.

#### **Flexible Working Consultation**

This consultation considers measures to increase the availability and uptake of the full range of flexible working options – whether that is a part-time or job-sharing working arrangement, flexing working hours or working remotely – freeing employers and employees alike from the default 9 to 5 model.

The consultation proposes that every employee in Great Britain is given the right to request flexible working, regardless of time served, under our plans to modernise the way we work and improve business productivity.

Under the proposals – which would see around 2.2 million more people given the right to request flexible working – employees would also be able to make more than one request for flexible working each year, and the current three-month period an employer has to consider each request would be shortened.

If an employer is unable to accommodate a request, our consultation proposes that they would need to consider what alternatives they could offer. For example, if they couldn't change their employee's hours on all working days, they could consider making the change for certain days instead.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to working arrangements. While certain ways of working may suit some employers and employees, they won't suit everyone. Therefore it is important that Government does not prescribe specific arrangements in legislation. Instead, these proposals would provide a strengthened legislative framework that encourages conversations around flexible working to be more two-sided. They are designed to balance the needs of employee and employer, and encourage all parties to focus on what may be possible, rather than what is not.

Empowering workers to have more say over where and when they work makes for more productive businesses, and happier employees. Flexible working allows employees to balance their work and home life: including helping people manage childcare commitments or other caring responsibilities. It can also be key to ensuring that people

who are under-represented in the workforce, such as new parents or disabled people, have access to more employment opportunities.

Alongside clear benefits to workers, there is a compelling business case for flexible working. Benefits include:

- Attracting top talent – Research conducted by Timewise, a flexible working consultancy, has shown that 87% of people want to work flexibly, rising to 92% for young people.
- A highly motivated, productive workforce – Research published by HSBC shows that 9 in 10 employees consider flexible working to be a key motivator to their productivity at work – ranking it as more important than financial incentives. Employers have reported seeing improvements in staff motivation and employee relations.
- A better business environment - the CBI Employment Trends survey found that 99% of all businesses surveyed believed that a flexible workforce is vital or important to competitiveness and the prospects for business investment and job creation.

For both these individual and business reasons, the Conservative Party's 2019 manifesto committed to a consultation on measures to help make flexible working the default unless employers have good reasons not to. Today's publication delivers on that commitment. It also contains our response to measures in the July 2019 "Good Work Plan: proposals to support families" consultation on publishing flexible working and family-related leave and pay policies; and stating whether jobs may be open to flexible working in the advert.

While the consultation focuses on contractual flexible working arrangements, the Government recognises that people don't always need something so formal to help them balance their home and work life. The consultation therefore also sets out our future plans for a call for evidence on how to support more 'ad hoc' and informal forms of flexibility, for example to attend a one-off appointment.

The territorial extent of the proposals included in this consultation extends to England, Wales, and Scotland (employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland).

The consultation runs for 10 weeks until 1 December 2021. I will place copies of the Flexible Working consultation in the Libraries of the House.

### **Government Response to the Carer's Leave Consultation**

The Government has also today published its response to the consultation on Carer's Leave.

Around five million people across the UK are providing unpaid care by looking after or helping a family member, relative or friend. Nearly half do this while also working full-time or part-time. Juggling caring responsibilities and work can be challenging and can limit the participation of unpaid carers in the labour market. Women, who are often still the primary carers within families, tend to be disproportionately impacted.

The 2019 Manifesto committed to introduce an entitlement to one week of leave for unpaid carers. This was followed, last year, by a consultation on Carer's Leave, which recognised that unpaid carers face particular challenges in balancing work and caring responsibilities that may warrant a specific new employment right to time off from work.

The response, published today, sets out key aspects of the leave entitlement, including:

- Employees with caring responsibilities for a dependant with long-term care needs will be entitled to one working week of unpaid Carer's Leave (per employee, per year).
- This new right will be available from the first day of employment.
- Eligibility for the new right, both in terms of who the employee is caring for and how the leave can be used, will be broadly defined.
- The leave can be taken flexibly (i.e. from several half day blocks to a single block of whole week).

The entitlement has been designed to balance the needs of employers and employees, ensuring that employers are able to plan and manage the absence created by Carer's Leave. These include a minimum notice period and enabling employers to postpone (but not deny) the request for Carer's Leave where the employer considers the operation of their business would be unduly disrupted.

The territorial extent of the proposals included in this Government response to the consultation on Carer's Leave extends to England, Wales, and Scotland (employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland).

I will place copies of the Carer's Leave consultation response in the Libraries of the House.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ **Update on Infected Blood Compensation Framework Study Terms of Reference**

**Paymaster General (Michael Ellis):**

[\[HCWS305\]](#)

On 20 May my predecessor, my Right Honourable friend, the member for Portsmouth North, announced the appointment of Sir Robert Francis QC to carry out an independent study to look at options for a framework for compensation for victims of infected blood. The study will make recommendations for compensation, before the Infected Blood Inquiry reports. Terms of Reference of the study were to be finalised following consultation between Sir Robert and those infected and affected. The consultation period concluded in August, and Sir Robert wrote to my predecessor with his recommendations.

Sir Robert's consultation received a positive response from the infected and affected community. 447 formal responses were submitted (including from many of the legal representatives of infected and affected core participants of the Inquiry), along with over 150 further representations, primarily personal accounts from the infected and affected on how this tragedy has affected their lives. These accounts were of great assistance to Sir

Robert in reviewing the draft Terms of Reference. Sir Robert wishes to express his gratitude to the many individuals who contributed to the consultation, in many cases having to relive the awful experiences they have suffered over so many years, and I would like to echo his gratitude.

Sir Robert's recommendations identify the key issues that the study should consider. They offer assurance to the infected and affected communities that the matters of most concern to them will be considered by the Study. I am therefore happy to accept Sir Robert's recommendations in full, and I am today publishing the following Terms of Reference without amendment:

### **RATIONALE FOR COMPENSATION**

- To consider the rationale for compensation as a matter of general principle and in relation to any particular classes of compensation, recognising that it is not for the Study to pre-empt the determination by the Infected Blood Inquiry as to what, if any, rationale is supported by the evidence it has received;

### **INDEPENDENT ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT**

- Give independent advice to the Government regarding the design of a workable and fair framework for compensation for individuals infected and affected across the UK to achieve parity between those eligible for compensation regardless of where in the UK the relevant treatment occurred or place of residence. While the Study is to take into account differences in current practice and/or law in the devolved administrations, it is not asked to consider whether delivery of that framework should be managed centrally or individually by the devolved administrations;

### **SCOPE OF COMPENSATION**

- To consider the scope of eligibility for such compensation (including the appropriateness or otherwise of any conditions such as 'cut-off' dates), and whether it should be extended beyond infected individuals and their partners, to include for example affected parents and children, the wider affected family (e.g. siblings), and significant non-family carers and others affected, either because of the impact of caring responsibilities or the effects of bereavement or some other impact; to include consideration of former and new partnerships/marriages; and whether the estate of any individual who has died should be eligible for compensation;

### **CATEGORIES OF INJURY AND LOSS**

- To consider the injuries, loss and detriments that compensation should address, in relation to the past, present and future, including:

(a) the physical impact and consequences of infection/s (including the effect of any treatment, and potential future adverse effects);

(b) infections that cleared naturally; and the risk of any significant or long-term side effects of treatment (such as liver damage, increased risk of cancer) even if they are yet to materialise;



(c) the mental health, social and financial impacts (including access to financial services) - both actual and in terms of loss of opportunities - suffered by both the infected and affected; and

(d) other types of loss if appropriate;

#### **TYPES OF AWARD AND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT**

- To consider: (a) the extent to which any framework should offer compensation on the basis of an individualised assessment and/or fixed sums or a combination of these (including consideration of the position of an individual who was both infected, and affected by another individual's infection);

(b) whether awards should be by way of final lump sums, periodical payments or both;

(c) whether an individual should be required to prove matters (if so what types of matters, by what means, and to what standard);

(d) whether there should be any limitation by way of time or other bar on entitlement or claim, and whether any existing time bars should be maintained;

(e) the extent to which compensation should be limited to matters currently recognised by the law (taking into account any differences in the law across the UK) on damages and evidence as recoverable for the purposes of compensation, or, if not, the basis on which broader matters should be taken into account;

#### **MEASURES FOR COMPENSATION**

- To consider the measures for compensation, looking at other national schemes (for example, the compensation tribunal established in the Republic of Ireland) to examine their merits or otherwise, and experiences, both as to form (i.e. administration/process) and the substance of compensation;

#### **RELATIONSHIP WITH CURRENT SCHEMES**

- To consider the relationship between a compensation framework and other receipts and payments by individuals, including: (a) the pre-existing financial support schemes; (b) legal claims; (c) welfare benefits and tax;

#### **OPTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE SCHEME**

- To consider options for administering the scheme (including but not limited to what bodies, organisations or tribunals might need to be established to facilitate such administration); what principles, aims or criteria etc might underpin the development of an appropriate scheme; and any ancillary matters which should be considered such as interim payments, publicity of the scheme, outreach to potential claimants, and support;

#### **OTHER ISSUES**

- To consider other issues that, in the course of his investigations, Sir Robert considers relevant; and

#### **REPORTING TO GOVERNMENT BY FEBRUARY 2022**

- To Submit to the Government its report and recommendations as quickly as possible and no later than the end of February 2022, to provide the Government with advice on potential options for compensation framework design.

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Sir Robert and his team will now begin the more detailed conversations and analysis to look into the detail of the issues raised by the infected and affected community. This will allow him to produce a set of comprehensive recommendations to the complex issues involved.

I, like my predecessor, am deeply committed to ensuring that Sir Brian Langstaff's independent public inquiry has all the resources it needs to complete its work; in Sir Brian's words, "as quickly as thoroughness permits". The infected blood scandal continues to claim the lives of infected people, and those directly affected have waited too long for answers, and for justice.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ NATO Parliamentary Assembly

**Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly):** [\[HCWS304\]](#)

The hon. Member for Angus (Dave Doogan) has replaced the hon. Member for Lanark and Hamilton East (Angela Crawley) as a Member of the United Kingdom delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

## PRIME MINISTER

### ■ Machinery of Government

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):** [\[HCWS309\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Responsibility for driving forward the levelling up agenda and elections and UK governance and devolution policy is being moved to create a new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This change will embed levelling up commitments and policy on governance in the United Kingdom and elections within a single department which already manages relationships with local communities, local government and the housing sector. Bringing these responsibilities together will allow the Secretary of State to embed ever closer working with the Territorial Offices and lead coordination with the devolved administrations on my behalf.

The new department will consist of staff previously employed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and staff from the Union and Constitution Group in the Cabinet Office in support of cross-Whitehall efforts aimed at delivering tangible improvements in every part of the UK. A Levelling Up Taskforce has also been

established which will report jointly to me and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

## TREASURY

### ■ **Agreement between the British Trade and Cultural Office, Taipei and the Taipei Representative Office in the United Kingdom**

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lucy Frazer):** [\[HCWS306\]](#)

A Protocol to the Agreement with the Taipei Representative Office in London was signed in London on 11th August and in Taipei on 19th August. The text of the Protocol is available on HM Revenue and Customs' pages of the GOV.UK website and will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. The text of the Protocol will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.

### ■ **UK national risk assessment of proliferation financing**

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):** [\[HCWS307\]](#)

As a major global financial centre, a key component of the UK's economic strength and prosperity is our openness to investment and trade. However, this quality also makes the UK economy vulnerable to illicit finance activities, including proliferation financing. Despite robust controls in place in the UK to tackle proliferation financing activity, actors involved in proliferation financing look to exploit the UK's position in the global economy and international financial system to raise funds to develop chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) programmes which counter UK national security objectives and threaten international peace and security.

On 23 September, the Government published the UK's first national risk assessment (NRA) of proliferation financing risks. This assessment, published by HM Treasury using views and evidence from Government, the private sector, and academic and research partners, provides a comprehensive review of the proliferation financing risks facing the UK. The UK is one of the first jurisdictions to carry out an assessment of this kind.

The key findings of the UK national risk assessment of proliferation financing are:

1. The UK's financial sector is at high risk from proliferation actors. It is highly likely that proliferation actors will target the UK to gain financing for CBRN proliferation despite the robust controls in place to prevent this. The UK's financial services industry, particularly the banking and insurance sectors, is especially at risk.
1. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran are the most significant proliferation financing actors at state level. The DPRK seeks to evade international sanctions regimes to obtain financing for its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, and Iran for its nuclear programme.
1. There is limited awareness in the private sector of proliferation financing compared to other risks, including money laundering and terrorist financing. A lack of awareness of proliferation financing in parts of the UK economy can lead to a

lack of understanding of how certain industrial products, for example, may be manipulated for hostile use or for use in a CBRN programme.

1. Despite the above threats, the assessment highlights the robust counter-proliferation legal framework in place in the UK to protect the country from proliferation financing. The UK's autonomous financial sanctions regimes targeting CBRN proliferation, as well as UN sanctions regimes implemented in the UK, export control regimes, and other tools available to the UK Government, limit opportunities for proliferating actors to exploit the UK to obtain financing for CBRN capabilities.

The report is available on Gov.uk [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-assessment-of-proliferation-financing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-assessment-of-proliferation-financing)

The national risk assessment demonstrates the UK's ongoing commitment to counter proliferation financing, set out in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development, and Foreign Policy 2021. We also committed to publishing a proliferation financing NRA in the Government's Economic Crime Plan. Moreover, the UK is at the forefront of international efforts to counter proliferation financing, particularly at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) where we have led progress on updating FATF recommendations focussing on proliferation financing.

This is the first NRA the UK has produced evaluating the threat posed by proliferation financing. Under proposed amendments to the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing, and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations (MLRs), HM Treasury will be required to review and update this NRA on a regular basis. This would offer opportunities to further refine the assessment and its methodology going forward and ensure that the UK is proactively seeking to address new threats and trends posed by proliferation financing. In this proposed amendment of the MLRs, which is currently out for public consultation until October 2021, the Treasury also plans to set requirements on relevant persons to take appropriate steps to identify and assess the risks posed by proliferation financing, and to establish strategies to mitigate and manage these risks effectively. The findings of this assessment will also provide the UK with further opportunities to develop its counter- proliferation financing policy.

## ■ Update on Making Tax Digital

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lucy Frazer):**

**[HCWS308]**

The Government has set out an ambition to become one of the most digitally advanced tax authorities in the world.

Making Tax Digital (MTD) is the first phase of our move towards a modern, digital tax service fit for the 21st century. It supports businesses through their digitalisation journey and provides a digital service that many have come to expect in their everyday lives. MTD helps businesses reduce common errors in their tax affairs and allows for better customer interaction and guidance through digital prompts and nudges.

Since the introduction of MTD for VAT in 2019, over 1.5m businesses have joined and many are already experiencing benefits. MTD users are reporting that preparing and

submitting returns is easier, and that MTD has increased their confidence in managing tax affairs and using technology. MTD also puts businesses on a path to further digitalisation: integrating tax management with a range of business processes can contribute to productivity gains.

During the pandemic, UK businesses increasingly turned to digital tools to communicate remotely and work collaboratively. Businesses adapted rapidly to the challenges posed by the pandemic, using digital solutions to maintain resilience and reduce disruption.

Over the past year, HMRC have worked closely with partners in the business and tax communities on the proposed design and scope of MTD for Income Tax (ITSA).

Today the Government has laid Regulations in Parliament to help those impacted by the changes to prepare, and for their representatives to develop their own support and guidance.

The Government recognises the challenges faced by many UK businesses and their representatives as the country emerges from the pandemic over the last year. In recognition of this and of stakeholder feedback, we will now be introducing MTD for ITSA a year later, in the tax year beginning in April 2024.

General partnerships will not be required to join MTD for ITSA until the tax year beginning in April 2025. The date at which all other types of partnerships will be required to join will be confirmed later.

In March 2021, the Government announced a new system of penalties for the late filing and late payment of tax for ITSA. This will now be introduced for those who are mandated for MTD for ITSA in the tax year beginning in April 2024, and for all other ITSA customers in the tax year beginning in April 2025.

Alongside the Regulations, HMRC have also today published a Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) setting out the projected benefit and cost impacts of MTD for ITSA, as well as a Policy Paper to help different businesses understand what their transition to MTD could look like in more detail.

A later start for MTD for ITSA provides more time for those required to join to make the necessary preparations and for HMRC to deliver the most robust service possible, affording additional time for testing in the pilot.

HMRC will continue to work in close partnership with business and accountancy representative bodies and software developers to ensure taxpayers are well supported as they adopt MTD for ITSA.

The Government has also recently consulted on a reform of the complex basis period rules that govern how self-employed profits are allocated to tax years. Many respondents said that the reform was a sensible simplification but asked for more time to implement the changes. In recognition of these concerns, these changes will not come into effect before April 2024, with a transition year not coming into effect earlier than 2023. The Government will respond to the consultation in due course providing the next steps.