Daily Report

Tuesday, 6 November 2018

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 November 2018 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 06 November 2018). 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

Carbon Budgets: Climate Change

Mr Roger Godsiff: [186935]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) representations his Department has received and (b) assessment his Department has made since the publication of the IPCC report on global warming of 1.5 degrees on the potential (i) economic and (ii) climatic merits of amending the UK's third, fourth and fifth carbon budgets.

Claire Perry:

The Department receives a wide variety of representations on many topics including the IPCC Special Report on global warming of 1.5 degrees.

We are leading the world in our response to the IPCC report – commissioning our independent experts, the Committee on Climate Change, for advice on our long-term targets a week after the report's publication. We will consider the Committee's advice carefully when received.

Carbon Capture and Storage

Mr Roger Godsiff: [184862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 October 2018 to Question 180631, what progress has been made on developing carbon capture and storage; how many plants are using that technology; what the price per tonne is of carbon captured in the UK; what proportion of carbon emissions are captured; and what projection he has made of the proportion of carbon that will be captured in the next 30 years.

Claire Perry:

Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) has an important role in supporting decarbonisation of industry, power, heat and transport.

There are 18 large-scale CCUS projects operating globally capturing over 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. Although there are no large-scale CCUS projects operating in the UK, information on the estimated price per tonne of carbon captured across a range of CCUS projects can be found at:

https://www.globalccsinstitute.com/publications/global-costs-carbon-capture-and-storage

The Government is committed to supporting the development of CCUS in the UK. The Clean Growth Strategy included three illustrative pathways to meeting our 2050 target over the next thirty years. Two of these included a role for CCUS, with up to 170 Million tonnes of CO2e being captured and stored in 2050. CCUS can reduce

emissions from our industrial centres, and offers opportunities to improve the competitiveness of UK industry. That is why we are investing £100 million to March 2021 on industrial energy and CCUS innovation.

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: British Petroleum Mr Roger Godsiff: [186940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings have been held between representatives from BP and (a) his Ministers, (b) his officials and (c) representatives from the Oil and Gas Authority in each of the last two years.

Claire Perry:

All Government Ministers and officials meet regularly with industry representatives, including those from the energy industry. A register of ministerial meetings is published on a quarterly basis as part of Departments' transparency data.

Fracking: Earthquakes

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[185492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the earthquakes at the fracking site in Little Plumpton Lancashire; and if he will make a statement.

Claire Perry:

The independent oil and gas regulator, the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), is responsible for ensuring operators mitigate the risk of induced seismicity. The OGA is continually monitoring operations around the Preston New Road site to ensure they remain in line with Cuadrilla's Hydraulic Fracture Plan, which was independently approved by the OGA and Environment Agency before the commencement of hydraulic fracturing operations.

The Traffic Light System, which dictates the required response to seismic activity, has worked at the Preston New Road site in exactly the way that it was designed to. The very minor seismic events recorded at the Preston New Road site cannot be felt at the surface.

The UK has world-leading safety and environmental regulations to ensure that shale gas exploration is carried out safely and responsibly, and the Government believes the current system is fit for purpose.

Louise Haigh: [185662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has required any steps to be taken by Cuadrilla before it resumes fracking in Lancashire following the recent earthquake in that place; and if he will make a statement.

Claire Perry:

The independent oil and gas regulator, the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), is responsible for ensuring operators mitigate the risk of induced seismicity. The OGA is

continually monitoring operations around the Preston New Road site to ensure they remain in line with Cuadrilla's Hydraulic Fracture Plan, which was independently approved by the OGA, Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) before the commencement of hydraulic fracturing operations.

The Traffic Light System dictates that if an event of $0.5M_{\perp}$ or above is detected and causally linked to operations, Cuadrilla must pause operations for 18 hours and reduce well pressure. Operations are only allowed to resume once regulators are satisfied that any risks have been appropriately mitigated. The very minor seismic events recorded at the Preston New Road site cannot be felt at the surface.

Fracking: Lancashire

Mr Roger Godsiff: [183234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the detection of seismic activity caused by drilling on the continuation of fracking in Lancashire.

Claire Perry:

In the UK, we have been regulating for gas and oil drilling, both onshore and offshore, for many years and have one of the best track records in the world when it comes to protecting our environment while also developing our industries.

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) monitors seismicity as part of their regulatory duties at shale gas sites. Before consent for hydraulic fracturing is granted, a Hydraulic Fracture Plan must be agreed with the OGA. Operators have to evaluate the historical and background seismicity and the in-situ stress regime, and delineate faults in the area of the proposed well to identify the risk of activating any fault by hydraulic fracturing. The fracture plan also includes appropriate plans to monitor seismicity before, during and after the well operations.

The OGA requires certain controls and requirements to be adhered to by an operator including following a real-time traffic light system during hydraulic fracturing. If a seismic event over 0.5ML on the 'Richter Local Scale' (a 'red' event) is detected and causally linked to the operations, hydraulic fracturing is suspended for a minimum of 18 hours.

Seismic events with a magnitude of 2.0 or below (on the Local Richter Scale) are usually not felt at the surface and a magnitude 0.5 is far below the ground motion caused by a passing vehicle, for context, the British Geological Survey has estimated that in the UK we have, on average, around 166 natural occurring earthquakes of 2.9ML and below per year.

Housing: Insulation

Alex Norris: [187128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to improve energy usage through better domestic insulation.

Claire Perry:

Last year, the Government published the Clean Growth Strategy which set out our aspiration that as many homes as possible will be upgraded to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective and affordable. A number of policies have been put in place to help drive domestic insulation including:

- The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme which requires obligated energy suppliers to install energy efficiency and heating measures to people's homes in England, Scotland and Wales. ECO is funded at £640 million per annum (2017 prices, rising with inflation), and we are taking steps to focus that scheme on those in fuel poverty. The Clean Growth Strategy announced that we would extend support for home energy efficiency out to 2028 at least at the current level of ECO funding.
- The Private Rented Sector Minimum standard regulations which were introduced on 1 st April 2018 and require landlords to bring their properties to EPC Band E or above; or register an exemption, if one applies. We have recently announced that we will be strengthening those regulations further to require a contribution of up to £3,500 from landlords towards the cost of improvements.
- Six local supply chain demonstration projects which are about to be launched across the country. They will focus on reducing the cost for retrofit and building supply chain capacity whilst also addressing the non-financial barriers to deeper retrofit, such as supply chain fragmentation and the high hassle costs of installing measures.
- The Simple Energy Advice Service, which was launched as part of Green Great Britain Week. The new digitally-led service provides impartial and tailored advice on how homeowners can cut energy bills and make their homes greener. Individuals can also find out which insulation measure best suits their home, how much they could save and what governmental financial support is available.
- The BEIS Thermal Efficiency Innovation Fund which awarded organisations £7.5m grant funding to develop technologies and approaches to improve the energy efficiency of existing UK (domestic and commercial) buildings in summer 2018. Funded project activities include piloting approaches to optimising the specification and performance of domestic insulation measures, and the development of innovative insulation materials and processes to reduce the installation costs of measures.
- The launch of a new quality mark for home energy improvements following the independent Each Home Counts review to help provide greater consumer confidence in the quality of installations.

We also committed in the Clean Growth Strategy to bring forward further measures in the future, including our intention to consult on making improvements to Building Regulations, and to look at a long-term trajectory for energy performance standards in the rented sector, with a view to as many rented homes as possible reaching EPC Band C by 2030.

■ INEOS: Tees Valley

Anna Turley: [187064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has with Ineos on that company choosing the South Tees Development Corporation site as the manufacturing location for its Projekt Grenadier 4x4 vehicles.

Richard Harrington:

Government has a long-standing programme of support to maintain the competitiveness of the UK automotive sector. This includes the Automotive Sector Deal. This is a joint strategic vision for how government and industry will work together to respond to the Grand Challenges of the Industrial Strategy, such as Clean Growth and the Future of Mobility.

I am delighted that Sir Jim Ratcliffe is considering the UK as a place for large-scale investment into the automotive sector. The Department has maintained close engagement with INEOS throughout their process and has met with the company and members of the South Tees Development Corporation on several occasions. We continue to promote UK options with INEOS, and stand ready to support in any way we can.

Iron and Steel: Tees Valley

Anna Turley: [<u>187065</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions the Government has had with steel companies on the construction of electric arc furnaces on Teesside.

Richard Harrington:

The Government continues to work with Mayor Ben Houchen and the Tees Valley Combined Authority to promote new investment in the Tees Valley, including in the materials sector. Such discussions are commercially sensitive. Any proposals that request public funding are assessed for their robustness, strategic fit and value for money.

Manufacturing Industries: Location

Frank Field: [187160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to encourage businesses to relocate their manufacturing functions to the UK.

Richard Harrington:

As part of the Industrial Strategy, we are working closely with UK industry to create the right conditions for competitive, world leading manufacturing businesses to flourish and grow across the UK.

Our Grand Challenges look to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future, directing the focus of the government and engaging the private sector to

ensure we take advantage of major global trends, which will improve people's lives and the country's productivity.

The Department for International Trade has a clear mission to attract new manufacturing investment into the UK. The Department for International Trade has dedicated teams who work across the world to promote the UK as a destination for investment into manufacturing and to boost trade from UK manufacturing companies abroad. It launched its Foreign Direct Investment strategy this year to deliver a more targeted approach to promotion and investor support across all sectors, including manufacturing.

Natural Gas: Storage

Alex Norris: [186427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help energy suppliers improve gas storage to minimise the risk of a National Grid gas deficit warning this winter.

Claire Perry:

Great Britain benefits from a diverse range of gas supplies, including our indigenous production, which means that demand can be met even under severe weather conditions, as was the case in March 2018. The Government keeps gas security of supply under constant review producing, with Ofgem, annual security of supply reports for Parliament. National Grid, as the system operator, also produce a Winter Outlook each year. Both National Grid's Winter Outlook and the statutory security of supply report conclude that gas supplies are secure this winter. As part of its ongoing work on security of supply, the Government is currently engaging with providers of flexible supply sources, including gas storage, on the trends in these markets and their implications for security of supply.

Post Offices: Closures and Franchises

Rachael Maskell: [187068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been allocated to settlement agreements following the announcement that 74 Crown post offices will be closed or franchised.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

The Post Office is a responsible employer and takes its duty of care to all staff affected by its franchising programme very seriously. Post Office employees at affected branches have the right to transfer their employment in line with TUPE legislation, to leave the business with a voluntary settlement, or to be redeployed elsewhere in the Company. The Post Office reports total figures for severance on an annual basis as part of its Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Rachael Maskell: [187073]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether all Crown post offices are planned to be closed or franchised.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK. This is why the Government committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office – to maintain a network of at least 11,500 branches and to do so more sustainably for the taxpayer – it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business.

The decision whether to franchise further Crown post offices is an operational matter of commercial judgement for the Post Office.

Rachael Maskell: [187074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's definition is of a public consultation; and what parts of the closure and franchising of Crown post offices his Department plans to consult on.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK. This is why the Government committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. Therefore, the Government does not consult on the franchising programme as this is an operational matter for the Post Office. For any branches that are relocating, the Post Office will conduct a six-week local public consultation in line with its 'principles of community engagement in changes to the Post Office network' agreed with Citizens Advice.

Post Offices: Franchises

Rachael Maskell: [187069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for how long the Post Office is planning to subsidise the staff costs of franchised Crown post officers following the announcement that 74 Crown post offices will be closed or franchised.

Rachael Maskell: [187070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Post Office plans to subsidise the differential between WHSmiths' remuneration package

and the Post Office remuneration package where post offices have been franchised to WHSmith.

Kelly Tolhurst:

WHSmith have been operating Post Offices in their High Street Stores since 2006.

The agreement between the Post Office and WHSmith is a commercial agreement between them and as such the financial terms of the deal are commercially confidential and cannot be publicly disclosed. However, the Post Office has been clear in its duty of care for any staff affected, in that they have the right to transfer their employment to the franchise partner in line with TUPE legislation and there might also be opportunities for redeployment or voluntary settlement.

WHSmith have been operating Post Offices in their High Street Stores since 2006.

Rachael Maskell: [187072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will enable Post Offices that make a profit to remain as a Crown post office rather than being franchised.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Post Office has commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. The decision whether to franchise a Crown post office is an operational matter of commercial judgement for the Post Office.

There are over 11,300 branches (almost 98% of the total network) already operating successfully on a franchise or agency basis. Franchising is part of the Post Office's modernisation programme designed to improve customer experience while putting the network on a sustainable footing and reducing the burden to the taxpayer. This helped Crown branches move from a £46 million loss in 2012 to a break even today.

■ Technology: East Midlands

Ben Bradley: [183953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to promote the expansion of the technology sector in the East Midlands.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Through our modern Industrial Strategy, we are creating opportunities for the UK technology sector to build on its strengths and continue to grow. This includes the ambition to raise total R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027. The government is increasing spending on R&D by £7bn by 2021/22, the largest increase in 40 years.

Support in the East Midlands includes the recently announced funding to support the creation of a new, locally-led development body for Toton, with £70m for the Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre. Innovate UK funding of £12m has been invested by the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) in the Research and Acceleration Demonstration Building on Nottingham University's Innovation Park. The D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership has contributed £5m of Local Growth Fund to the Advanced

Manufacturing Building at Nottingham University's Jubilee Campus. The facility will allow for diverse engineering and science disciplines to collaborate and contribute to pioneering developments for a range of sectors.

Through the Midlands Engine Strategy, we are investing in skills, industries, and infrastructure – building on the many strengths of the Midlands to boost productivity. It confirmed the Midlands Engine Investment Fund, which provides over £250 million to support small businesses across the Midlands to start and grow.

■ WH Smith: Post Offices

Rachael Maskell: [187071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the Post Office will spend on (a) retrofitting and (b) refurbishing WHSmith stores as a result of franchising agreements.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK. This is why the Government committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. I have therefore asked Paula Vennells, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to you on this matter. A copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

CABINET OFFICE

Billing

Jon Trickett: [186191]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Crown Commercial Service's Transparency data, CCS prompt payment data 2018-19, whether the aggregated totals figure of 196.88 per cent for the percentage of invoices paid within five days is correct; and if he will make a statement.

Oliver Dowden:

The Crown Commercial Service fully complies with all regulatory requirements set out in Section 113(7) of the Public Contracts Regulations (2015).

The Crown Commercial Service will remove "aggregated totals" fields from future prompt payment data publications.

Birth Rate

Vicky Foxcroft: [186401]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on the (a) birth and (b) infant mortality rate in (i) England, (ii) London and (iii) the London Borough of Lewisham for each of the last 10 years.

Mr David Lidington:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [PQ186401.pdf]

Business: Human Rights

Jo Swinson: [184945]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the efficacy of the human rights due diligence of the businesses that his Department's Prosperity Fund supports.

Jo Swinson: [184946]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that businesses supported by his Department's Prosperity Fund undertake adequate human rights due diligence.

Mr David Lidington:

Promotion of human rights remains a fundamental objective of UK foreign policy, and we remain committed to universal human rights – it is the right thing to do. The Prosperity Fund is committed to ensuring that safeguarding and modern slavery considerations are consistent with wider ODA policy and practice across government led by DFID. A Prosperity Fund Commercial Framework, managed by the FCO, has recently been put in place to support the commercial delivery of major Prosperity Fund programmes. This incorporates a supplier code of conduct covering areas such as safeguarding, social responsibility, human rights and ethical behaviour. In addition, implementing departments are actively working to align due diligence processes to ensure adequate assessment of potential partners' ability to apply safeguards in their work, in particular to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from sexual exploitation and abuse.

■ Cabinet Office: Apprentices

David Linden: [185750]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many apprentices are employed in his Department.

Oliver Dowden:

The Cabinet Office currently employs 72 apprentices who are actively completing an apprenticeship, this equates to 1.12% of our workforce.

Cabinet Office: Pay

Jon Trickett: [185517]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total value is of the payroll commitments of the staff transferred from HMRC to his Department in the last 12 months.

Mr David Lidington:

The information is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost to the Cabinet Office.

David Linden: [185770]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £8.75 per hour.

Oliver Dowden:

In my Department, no staff working outside London are paid less than UK Living Wage of £8.75 per hour and no staff working in London are paid less than the London Living Wage of £10.20 per hour.

Government Departments: Billing

Jon Trickett: [185519]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason his Department has not published the data on Cabinet Office prompt payment for (a) the third and second quarter of the 2017-2018 financial year and (b) the first and second quarter of the 2018-2019 financial year under procurement policy.

Mr David Lidington:

Cabinet Office moved to a new shared service platform in May 2017, which required a significant volume of complex data transfer between the old and new platforms. A number of issues were identified which called into question the accuracy of payment performance data, so the Department suspended prompt payment reporting until assured data was available. This has now been achieved, and we plan to publish the outstanding data shortly.

Jon Trickett: [186192]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's press release of 10 April 2018, New changes to encourage small businesses to apply for government contracts, what progress he is making on excluding suppliers from major Government procurements if they cannot demonstrate fair and effective payment practices with subcontractors.

Oliver Dowden:

On the same day as the referenced press release, the Cabinet Office announced a consultation to gather views on whether it would be appropriate to exclude suppliers from major government procurements if they cannot demonstrate a fair, effective and responsible approach to payment in their supply chain management. This consultation closed on 5 June. We have been reviewing responses and will publish the outcome shortly.

In the meanwhile, Government strongly encourages businesses to report poor payment practice and instances of late payment in public sector contracts, including late payment through the supply chain, to the Mystery Shopper service in the Cabinet Office.

Jon Trickett: [187159]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the ability of Government contractors to pay invoices submitted by subcontractors within 30 days.

Oliver Dowden:

Regulation 113 of the Public Contracts Regulations contains statutory guidance for contracting authorities and suppliers on paying undisputed invoices in 30 days down the supply chain.

This will be preserved under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act when the UK leaves the European Union, with relevant adjustments necessary to ensure legal operability. This will give legal certainty and continuity to businesses and contracting authorities on day one of exit.

■ Government Departments: Contracts

Jon Trickett: [185521]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many SMEs were awarded government contracts in the 2017-2018 financial year.

Oliver Dowden:

Since January 2011, details of central government contracts, above the value of £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder at the following link:

https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search

Contract award notices must include the SME status of the winning supplier, in accordance with Procurement Policy Note 07/16.

Jon Trickett: [185522]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of SMEs contracted by central government to provide goods and services pay the living wage.

Oliver Dowden:

This information is not held centrally.

The government is determined to ensure that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum and Living Wage (NMW) receives it. Anyone who feels they have been unpaid NMW should contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) helpline on 0300 123 1100 or via the online complaints form at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pay-and-work-rights-complaints

Jon Trickett: [185523]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Crown Commercial Service collects data on the payment practices of SMEs holding contracts with central government.

Oliver Dowden:

This information is not held centrally.

Government strongly encourages businesses to report poor payment practice and instances of late payment, including late payment through the supply chain, in public sector contracts to the Mystery Shopper service in the Cabinet Office

■ Government Digital Service: Conditions of Employment

Jon Trickett: [185524]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2018 to Question 183247 on Government Digital Service: Staff, how many of the 751 people employed by the Government Digital Service are off payroll workers.

Oliver Dowden:

The Government Digital Service (GDS) currently has 45 off payroll (interim) workers in addition to the 751 employees outlined in the previous response.

Pay

Stephen Timms: [186920]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of all jobs for which monthly earnings are less than the national average pay the employee (a) weekly, (b) fortnightly, (c) four-weekly and (d) monthly.

Mr David Lidington:

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to reply.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [PQ 186920.pdf]

Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

Jon Trickett: [185520]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to this Department's press release entitled Government announces major changes to rebuild trust after Carillion, published on 25 June 2018, what progress he has made on reforming the Public Services Public Services)(Social Value) Act 2012.

Oliver Dowden:

The Cabinet Office is currently leading work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to implement a package of measures for the future of social value and procurement, as set out in Government's Civil Society Strategy. This includes training for government commercial staff to ensure that all major procurements in central government explicitly evaluate and report on their social value. Further information will be published in due course.

This is an extension of the application of the Social Value Act across central government departments, rather than legislative changes to the Act itself.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces: Conditions of Employment

Tracy Brabin: [187122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what employee benefits there are for new recruits to the armed forces who are not eligible to join the armed forces childcare vouchers scheme.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

Service personnel wishing to benefit from Income Tax and National Insurance savings (who were not claiming before October 2018) are eligible to join the new Government Tax Free Childcare Scheme. This was introduced in September 2017 to replace all salary sacrifice schemes introduced since 1989.

The previous Childcare Voucher scheme closed to new joiners on 4 October 2018. Existing members can continue to use the scheme.

In addition to the universal entitlement to 15 hours (or 30 hours for eligible working parents) of free early education and childcare for children from the term after their third birthday, some English local authorities offer free hours of Ofsted registered childcare targeted to Service personnel with children aged two.

A significant number of nurseries are accommodated on the Defence estate at military bases aimed principally at ensuring nursery provision for Service personnel based at the location concerned. Such nurseries are not operated by Defence but are provided so that personnel have provision close to their place of work and close to their homes when accommodated in Service Families Accommodation. The provision

may offer an array of benefits to Service personnel ranging from priority placement to preferential rates.

In those overseas locations where Service personnel and their dependants have no statutory entitlement to access host nation provision, the MOD has committed to mirror as far as is reasonably practicable the statutory provision that would have been available in England. Where MOD-provided overseas childcare facilities have sufficient capacity, three and four-year old children will be provided for free of charge within the UK guidelines. In overseas locations where there are no MOD-provided childcare facilities, or such facilities lack sufficient capacity, the additional entitlement will be provided through the MOD Overseas Nursery Allowance.

Armed Forces: Pensions

Alex Norris: [187129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) armed forces widows and widowers and (b) war widows and war widowers have had their pensions reinstated following the removal of the means tested application process and other changes to widows' pension rights since April 2015.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

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

Cyprus: Military Bases

Tom Brake: [186914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on border access between the RAF bases Akrotiri and Dhekelia and Cyprus after the UK leave the EU.

Mark Lancaster:

As the Prime Minister stated in Parliament on 22 October 2018 (Official Report, column 648), a Protocol has now been developed for the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs), reflecting the constructive discussions between the UK, Republic of Cyprus and the EU. This will provide certainty for citizens, businesses and residents in the SBAs. We intend to maintain current arrangements for immigration checks for those entering the SBAs at the two crossing points from north Cyprus, which are recognised points of entry into the EU, and to ensure that no border controls are established between the SBAs in Akrotiri and Dhekelia and the Republic of Cyprus.

Sea King Helicopters

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[185064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) Sea King helicopters purchased by his Department, (b) RAF personal that crewed the Sea King helicopter fleet and (c) RAF service personal, excluding crew members, that

were involved in the daily maintenance of the Sea King helicopter fleet between 1969 and 2016.

Stuart Andrew:

The Ministry of Defence operated a total of 183 Sea King helicopters between 1969 and their out of service date in September this year.

It is not possible to estimate the number of RAF personnel that either crewed or maintained the Sea King helicopter fleet during that period as this information is not held centrally and personnel records do not provide the granularity of detail required.

Sea King Helicopters: Asbestos

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[185067]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department was first notified of asbestos in the Sea King helicopter fleet.

Stuart Andrew:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has known about the presence of asbestos in Sea King helicopters since they entered service in 1969 and it has been managed in accordance with the regulations in place at the time.

As part of the wider remit to reduce and eliminate Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) in military systems, progressive action was taken since 1999 to reduce ACM in the Sea King fleet. By 2006, as major ACM components had been replaced and the risk was identified as very low, remaining ACM components were replaced as and when maintenance allowed.

Earlier this year, a routine maintenance training activity being conducted on a retired Sea King airframe revealed the presence of asbestos and immediate containment measures were put in place. Subsequent investigation identified that the MOD supply chain had not been purged of ACM components, with the risk that these components could still be fitted to Sea King helicopters. Action has been taken to remove these components from the supply chain, initial guidance has been issued to serving and former personnel and further information will be made available as soon as we are able to do so.

Sea King Helicopters: Decommissioning

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

<u> 185065</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Sea King helicopters were decommissioned in 2016; and if any of those helicopters were subsequently brought back into service.

Stuart Andrew:

Sixteen Sea King helicopters were decommissioned in 2016. This included two Sea King HU Mk 5 helicopters which were retired from Ministry of Defence service and placed in the disposal reserve, until being regenerated for lease to a company, HeliOperations Ltd, for training purposes. This lease ended in September 2018.

Sea King Helicopters: Repairs and Maintenance

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[185066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the standard maintenance cycle of the Sea King helicopter included maintenance of the (a) engine, (b) gearbox and (c) heating and ventilation system.

Stuart Andrew:

Yes, standard maintenance of the Sea King helicopter included maintenance of the engine, gearbox and the heating and ventilation system.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Broadband: South West

Rebecca Pow: [185120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had and with whom on superfast broadband in the South West region, and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

Throughout the year officials from DCMS have engaged with counterparts from local projects in the South West region over a variety of issues, including roll-out of superfast broadband, and will continue to do so.

Last week, both the Secretary of State and the Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries wrote to MPs concerning superfast broadband, and BDUK director Raj Kalia wrote to local bodies as well.

Broadcasting: Disability Aids

Marion Fellows: [187059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to increase the number of broadcasts which are required to include (a) audio description for people with sight loss and (b) subtitles for people with hearing loss.

Marion Fellows: [187060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make it a requirement that all broadcasters use audio description access on all television channels.

Margot James:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer to PQ 186377, answered on 5th November.

Cybercrime

Jo Platt: [187149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 31 October 2018 to Question 184409, whether a participatory target was set for the cyber skills immediate impact fund.

Jo Platt: [187150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many bids have been submitted to the cyber skills immediate impact fund.

Jo Platt: [187151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the average financial bid submission is for applications to the cyber skills immediate impact fund.

Jo Platt: [187152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 31 October 2018 to Question 184409, how many of the 170 individuals who have participated in initiatives supported by the cyber skills immediate impact fund pilot are (a) women, (b) BAME and (c) disabled.

Margot James:

The Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund (CSIIF) pilot received 25 applications. In line with published CSIIF pilot funding ranges, funding of between £20,000 - £50,000 was available to applicants.

This Fund was designed to boost the cyber security training ecosystem by helping range of organisations quickly develop effective and sustainable initiatives that identify, train and place untapped talent from a range of backgrounds into cyber security roles. We set an internal ambition for the CSIIF pilot to support initiatives to get at least 100 adults into entry level cyber security roles.

Through the CSIIF pilot, we supported two initiatives focusing solely on women and three focusing primarily on supporting neurodiverse candidates. Of the approximately 170 individuals who are either participating or had been identified to take part, provisional figures show 48% declared as neurodiverse, 28% women and 13% BAME. These figures are subject to change and the pilot initiatives are still ongoing. The final evaluation of the pilot in 2019 will provide a final breakdown. We do not hold a figure for the number of disabled applicants.

Data Protection

Mr George Howarth:

[184887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department plans to take to encourage the collection of funds for the benefit of the consolidated fund by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) from all data controllers (a) who should have paid and (b) should pay (i) data notifications and (ii) registration fees to the ICO.

Mr George Howarth:

[184888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what limits his Department has been placed on the Information Commissioner's Office in respect of funds that it can use for its data protection activities; and what such excess funds have been remitted to the consolidated fund in each of the last 10 years.

Mr George Howarth:

[184889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, (a) what process has been involved in setting funding limits on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in respect of funds that it can use for its Data Protection activities in each of the last 10 years; and if he will place in the Library copies of all records relating to such processes including any notes of meetings and communications between the Government and the ICO.

Mr George Howarth:

[<u>184892</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has collected (a) all data notification fee income under the 1998 Data Protection Act and (b) registration fee income under the Data Protection Act 2018 from data controllers; and whether he has taken steps to ensure that such funds are allocated to the ICO rather than collected for the consolidated fund.

Margot James:

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is an independent regulator. Funding for data protection activities is provided by the data protection charges, which are levied on data controllers in accordance with the Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018 (previously the Data Protection (Notification and Notification Fees) Regulations 2000). The collection of the data protection charge (and previously the notification fee) is the responsibility of the ICO. The Data Protection Act 2018 sets out powers for the ICO to enforce collection of these charges, including penalties up to a maximum of 150% of the highest charge payable by a controller in that year (Part 5 section 158). The ICO is at liberty to use all funding generated by these charges for data protection activity.

As a body funded by public money, the ICO is subject to standard Cabinet Office Spend Controls and HMT's Managing Public Money principles. Full details on the controls pertaining to the ICO's expenditure are available in the Management Agreement between the ICO and DCMS.

Under the terms of this Management Agreement, the ICO is able to retain such funds as are necessary to meet any liabilities at the end of the financial year (such as creditors), or unspent funds up to a maximum of 3% of total annual data protection charge income (whichever is the greater). Any additional surplus would be remitted to the Consolidated Fund at the end of the financial year. This is the only scenario in which income from data protection charges would be remitted to the Consolidated Fund. As such, the data protection charge (previously notification fee) is not collected

for the benefit of the Consolidated Fund, but rather to ensure the ICO is able to fulfil its important regulatory functions.

Information on the amount of surplus remitted to the Consolidated Fund is not available for 2008/09 or 2009/10. For 2010/11 and 2011/12, this information is published on page 50 of the 2011/12 Annual Accounts. From 2012/13 onwards, this information is available in note 5b of the ICO's Annual Accounts for each year. Copies of the Annual Accounts for each year are available on the ICO's website www.ico.org.uk.

Mr George Howarth:

[184890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what processes exist within the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as regulator for dealing with concerns on the handling of data by the ICO as a data controller.

Mr George Howarth:

[<u>184891</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what enforcement action has been taken by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as regulator against the ICO as a data controller for non-compliance by the ICO with its obligations under data protection legislation in each of the last five years.

Margot James:

Section 15 of the ICO's service guide explains how they handle data protection concerns about the ICO. It explains that they will deal with such concerns in line with our usual procedures. There are also various options for redress should a complainant be dissatisfied with the ICO's handling of a complaint against them. Part 5 section 166 of the DPA 2018 sets out a complainant's powers to initiate a judicial review if they are not satisfied with the process followed by the ICO in handling an investigation into their complaint.

If, having exhausted the ICO's complaints procedure, an individual remains dissatisfied about any aspect of any service they have received from the ICO, or considers that the ICO has not acted properly or fairly, they can take the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Complaints to the Ombudsman must be made through the individual's MP. Further information about the Ombudsman's service can be found on their website http:// www.ombudsman.org.uk.

Complainants can also go to the courts to claim compensation should the complainant feel that is appropriate.

The number and outcome of any DP complaints about the ICO as a data controller will be published in their datasets online.

The ICO haven't taken any formal regulatory action against themselves as data controller.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Equal Pay

Tom Watson: [184911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to publish its data on the gender pay gap for 2017-2018.

Margot James:

DCMS is currently consulting with Cabinet Office on a publication date in line with, and at the same time as, other Government departments.

For reference, last year DCMS published its data alongside other Government departments on 18 December 2017.

Tom Watson: [184912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to close the gender pay gap since March 2017.

Margot James:

The steps we are taking to address the gender pay gap are detailed in the 2016/17 Gender Pay Gap report which was published in December 2017, and is available here (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-gender-pay-gap)

Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges

David Simpson: [184926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effect of the UK leaving the EU on mobile roaming charges in the EU.

Margot James:

Ministers have a range of meeting with their Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues, including the effect of the UK leaving the EU on mobile roaming charges in the EU.

National Archives: Staff

Catherine West: [185146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many staff (a) are employed directly by, (b) are seconded to and (c) work under contract in the National Archives.

Margot James:

The National Archives (a) employ 499 staff directly. They have no staff seconded or loaned into the Department and no contractors.

EDUCATION

Academies: Disclosure of Information

Angela Rayner: [185036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will publish a list of instances where multi-academy trusts have entered into a non-disclosure agreement with staff in each of the last five calendar years; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information requested is not held centrally.

All academy trusts are bound by the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook. This handbook establishes that they must ensure that the use of confidentiality clauses associated with staff severance payments do not prevent an individual's right to make disclosures in the public interest under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998).

Apprentices: Taxation

Gordon Marsden: [186952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of apprenticeship levy funds were spent by non-levy payers in 2017-18.

Anne Milton:

Since May 2018, levy-paying employers have been able to transfer up to 10% of their unused apprenticeship service funds to non-levy paying employer(s) to pay for the training and assessment cost of the apprenticeships agreed with the receiving employer. From May 2018, when the employers became able to make levy transfers, to July 2018 [2017-18 Academic Year] less than 1% of levy funds in employer apprenticeship service accounts were used to fund apprenticeships in this way for non-levy paying employers.

Other than through a levy transfer from a levy paying employer, apprenticeship levy funds cannot be accessed by non-levy paying employers. More information on how transfers work can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-apprenticeship-service-funds.

Children: Assessments

Tracy Brabin: [187120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the statutory basis for any obligation on (a) parents and (b) guardians to allow a child to take an assessment test before that child has reached the compulsory school age is.

Nick Gibb:

The compulsory school age is five under section 8 of the Education Act 1996. Whilst the reception year is not compulsory, children who are aged four who are enrolled in a reception class in a state-funded school are still covered by the requirements under

the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework within the Childcare Act 2006. This includes assessments carried out in the reception year.

Children's Commissioner for England: Staff

Catherine West: [185147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many staff (a) are employed directly by, (b) are seconded to and (c) work under contract in the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

Anne Milton:

The Children's Commissioner's Office consists of 29 employed members of staff. 28 members of staff are directly employed members of staff, including the Children's Commissioner. This is equivalent to 27.2 full time posts. One member of staff is currently seconded from a government department.

Department for Education: Social Media

Tulip Siddiq: [185023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department has spent from the public purse on promoted content on (a) Twitter, (b) Facebook and (c) Instagram in each month since June 2017.

Anne Milton:

The Department for Education (DfE) uses digital advertising as a cost effective way to reach target audiences, to deliver awareness and behaviour change campaigns to support government priorities such as recruiting teachers, starting apprenticeships and tackling child abuse.

In line with other government departments we buy media space through the government appointed media buying agency, Carat. The majority of our spend is on the department's teacher recruitment campaign. In the financial year 2017-18, DfE purchased media space on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to the value of £1,581,186.99. In 2018-19 to the end of September we spent £640,931.55. Ad hoc spend may not be included in this amount. On occasion, there may be some spend in certain months which will carry over into the following month.

Disabled Students' Allowances

Dr Lisa Cameron: [184973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2018 to Question 176361 on Disabled Students' Allowances, when that research will be published.

Mr Sam Gyimah:

The department expects to receive the research in December 2018, and will publish its findings soon after.

English Baccalaureate

Lucy Powell: [187033]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the full combination of EBACC entries in (a) independent and (b) state-funded schools were wholly (i) IGCSEs and (ii) GCSEs entries.

Nick Gibb:

Since the introduction of reformed GCSEs there are now very few international GCSEs which count in performance tables and the EBacc measures;[1] the only eligible English, maths, science and humanities qualifications eligible for inclusion in the EBacc are reformed GCSEs. There will be no pupils in an independent or a statefunded school with a full EBacc entry consisting wholly of international GCSE entries. A pupil could be completing international GCSEs in a range of EBacc subjects, but these would not all count in performance tables; meaning the pupil would not be included in the EBacc entry measure if they sat wholly international GCSEs.

The low number of international GCSEs that count in the EBacc entry measure means the majority of pupils with a full EBacc entry in both school types will have an EBacc entry wholly of GCSEs, but a small number will consist of a mix of GCSE and international GCSE entries. This number is not held separately and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

[1] Cambridge International Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in Greek and Cambridge International Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in Mandarin Chinese.

■ English Baccalaureate: IGCSE

Lucy Powell: [187032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2018 to Question 183354, how many of the 23,712 international GCSE entries in EBACC subjects in 2018 were taken in (a) independent schools and (b) independent special schools.

Nick Gibb:

Of the 23,712 International GCSE entries in EBacc subjects, 23,635 (99.7%) of them were taken in independent schools and 77 (0.3%) were taken in independent special schools.

■ Further Education: Capital Investment

Gordon Marsden: [186217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the £475 million for schools capital funding in his 2018 Autumn Budget to FE Colleges.

Anne Milton:

[Holding answer 5 November 2018]: General further education (FE) colleges have separate capital arrangements. Skills capital for FE colleges is delivered through the

Local Growth Fund, devolved to Local Enterprise Partnerships to spend on their capital priorities. This year, the government has made available £130 million in skills capital funding through this route.

In October 2018, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State announced an additional £38 million in capital funding to help ensure that the group of 2020 T level providers, including FE colleges, have the equipment and facilities necessary to deliver T levels from September 2020.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Budget that an additional £400 million will be made available to schools and sixth form colleges in England in 2018-19 to spend on capital projects to meet their own priorities.

Schools: Finance

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[<u>187038</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to paragraph 5.21 of Budget 2018 Red Book whether the £400 million for School Equipment and Maintenance Uplift applies to (a) specialist schools and (b) alternative provision.

Nick Gibb:

The new funding is for maintained nurseries, primary and secondary schools, academies and free schools, special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units, sixth-form colleges, and special post-16 institutions that have eligible state-funded pupils. Any institution that is eligible for devolved formula capital will also be eligible for the new funding. A full list of the institutions eligible for devolved formula capital in the financial year 2018-19 can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-allocations.

Secondary Education: Standards

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[186976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what changes there have been in the social background of children in secondary level education in the bottom quartile for educational attainment from 2007 to 2017.

Nick Gibb:

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils[1], in state-funded schools[2], in the bottom quartile[3] of Attainment 8 points for 2014/15 - 2016/17 is given in the attached table, along with the percentage of disadvantaged pupils in all state-funded schools for comparison.

In order to accurately identify the bottom quartile of pupils, an attainment measure with sufficient granularity is required. The Department's current headline attainment measure (Attainment 8) provides this but was only introduced in 2014/15. There is no current headline attainment measure with data available that is comparable over the requested period (2007 to 2017).

- [1] A pupil is classed as disadvantaged if they are known to have been eligible for free school meals in the past six years, if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care.
- [2] State-funded schools include academies, free schools, city technology colleges, further education colleges with provision for 14 to 16 year olds and state-funded special schools. They exclude independent schools, independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, hospital schools and alternative provision.
- [3] As numerous pupils can share the same score, splitting the cohort into precise quartiles is not possible. In 2014/15, 26.1% of pupils were included in the 'bottom quartile', in 2015/16 it was 26.0% and in 2016/17 it was 25.3%. This will have some effect on the proportions of disadvantaged pupils, as relatively fewer pupils are included in later years, but the nature of that effect cannot be definitively stated.

Attachments:

1. Attainment_table_state_funded_schools [186976_attainment_table.pdf]

Teachers: Pensions

Angela Rayner: [187042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 October 2018 to Question 183461 on Teachers: pensions, what estimate he has made of the cost to employers other than state-funded schools of increasing the employer contribution to the Teachers' Pension Scheme for the fiscal year 2020-21.

Angela Rayner: [187045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 30 October to Question 183461, if he will publish the higher education institutions that are participating in the Teachers Pension Scheme.

Nick Gibb:

The Department estimate that the costs to employers, other than state-funded schools, of increasing the employer contribution to the Teachers' Pension Scheme for the fiscal year 2020-21 will be as follows: £191 million for the Independent Sector, £142 million for Further Education Providers and £142 million for Higher Education Institutions. Funding arrangements for the increased costs will be considered as part of the next Spending Review.

The higher education establishments that participate in the Teachers' Pension Scheme mainly consist of the universities established from 6 May 1992 onwards. A full list of the establishments involved will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Teachers: Qualifications

Helen Hayes: [187097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of unqualified teachers working in schools in (a) Dulwich and West Norwood, (b) London and (c) England.

Nick Gibb:

The attached table provides the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of unqualified[1] and qualified teachers in service in state funded schools in Dulwich and West Norwood parliamentary constituency, London region and England, as of November 2017.

[1] An unqualified teacher in the local authority maintained sector is either a trainee working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); an overseas trained teacher who has not exceeded the four years they are allowed to teach without having QTS; or an instructor who as a particular skill who can be employed for so long as a qualified teacher is not available.

Attachments:

1. 187097_table_unqualified_teachers [187097_table_unqualified_teachers.pdf]

Helen Hayes: [187098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of unqualified teaching staff working in (a) maintained state schools, (b) academies and (c) free schools.

Nick Gibb:

The attached table provides the full-time equivalent teacher numbers and proportion of unqualified[1] teachers in service in (a) maintained state schools, (b) academies, (c) free schools in England, as of November 2017.

The figures above are publicly available in table 3a within the publication 'School Workforce in England, November 2017', available here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017.

[1] An unqualified teacher in the local authority maintained sector is either a trainee working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); an overseas trained teacher who has not exceeded the four years they are allowed to teach without having QTS; or an instructor who as a particular skill who can be employed for so long as a qualified teacher is not available.

Attachments:

1. 187098_table_unqualified_teachers_school_type [187098_table_unqualified_teacher_school_type.pdf]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animals: Licensing

Gordon Marsden: [186953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Federation of British Herpetologists on the implications for shops and businesses selling reptiles and related species of the new animal activities licence.

Gordon Marsden: [186954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the administration of the new animal activities licence on shops and businesses holding or selling reptiles and related species.

David Rutley:

Defra held meetings with stakeholders including the Federation of British Herpetologists during the drafting of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the Regulations). These discussions helped to inform us of the effect of the Regulations on all affected businesses. An impact assessment was carried out, as required with all new regulations.

Gordon Marsden: [186955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidelines he and his officials have given to local authorities as to the nature and reasonable costs of inspection and licence renewal for shops and businesses holding or selling reptiles and related species under the provisions of the new animal activities licence.

David Rutley:

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the Regulations) local authorities are able to charge a full cost recovery fee to the applicant. Guidance has been provided to local authorities about the enforcement of the Regulations and this includes a section on fee setting. The guidance includes what the fee can include and also refers to more comprehensive guidance on fees which the Local Government Association published in June 2017. Under the Regulations, any business achieving higher welfare standards will be entitled to a longer licence with fewer inspections at lower cost.

Gordon Marsden: [186956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the merits of extending the transition timetable for the new animal activities licence for shops selling reptiles and related species beyond 31 December 2018.

David Rutley:

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the Regulations) came into force on 1 October and modernise and streamline the licensing system for a range of licensable activities involving animals, including the sale of pets. Anyone applying for a new licence to sell pets in England will now do so under the new Regulations. Existing licences remain in force until their expiry, which is generally 31 December 2018. The Regulations have been subject to wide consultation with interested stakeholders including the pet industry and the reforms are widely welcomed. There are no plans to extend the application of existing licences beyond their current expiry date.

■ BSE: Disease Control

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[184913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what precautions have been taken to ensure there are no further outbreaks of BSE as a result of the recent incident in Aberdeenshire.

George Eustice:

All the evidence so far suggests this is an isolated case of classical Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). As this incident occurred in Aberdeenshire, the Scottish Government have led the response, with support from the Animal and Plant Health Agency. We have made clear Defra is ready to provide assistance as required.

The Scottish Government have commissioned an epidemiological investigation to determine how the animal became infected. Whilst the disease is not directly transmitted from animal to animal, the affected animal's three feed cohorts and one offspring have been traced and isolated, and have been humanely culled and tested for BSE as a precaution in line with UK and EU requirements. All test results are negative.

Studies have concluded that the BSE epidemic is in its final stage but that occasional cases should be expected in the 'tail end'. The last case in the UK before this one occurred in 2015.

Strict protection measures remain in place which have been effective in reducing cases to these very low levels. The measures include the ban on feeding animal protein to farmed animals, which prevents the spread of BSE to animals through feed; removing specified risk material (SRM) – the most risky parts of animals – at slaughter to protects consumers from risk from food; and surveillance to monitor the level of BSE over time and thereby check on the continued effectiveness of BSE controls.

Coal: Prices

Philip Davies: [184904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has commissioned research on the retail price differential between house coal and smokeless briquettes; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

In January, we launched a Call for Evidence on the domestic burning of house coal, smokeless coal, manufactured solid fuel and wet wood. Responses from the Call for Evidence included data on the price differential between house coal and smokeless briquettes and have been used to inform our analysis.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: CPL Industries

Philip Davies: [184902]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2018 to Question 180679 on CPL Industries, what meetings (a) he, (b) his Ministers and (c) his officials have had with CPL Ltd in the calendar years (i) 2016 and (ii) 2017; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Ministerial meetings with stakeholders are published quarterly on gov.uk here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministers-hospitality-gifts-meetings-overseas-travel.

This will list any meetings held between Defra ministers and our stakeholders.

No officials met with CPL Ltd. in 2016. Officials met with CPL Ltd. in March, July, August, October and November 2017.

Philip Davies: [184903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) his (i) Ministers and (ii) officials have visited a CPL Ltd site during the 2017 Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I visited the CPL site in Immingham in August 2017 as part of a series of stakeholder visits during summer recess. Officials also attended the visit.

Dogs: Smuggling

Dan Jarvis: [R] [187030]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to combat puppy smuggling into the UK.

David Rutley:

Illegal puppy smuggling is an abhorrent practice that abuses the Pet Travel Scheme (PTS), and we are determined to put an end to it.

We have increased resourcing at major UK ports. In partnership with Dogs Trust, enforcement bodies and transport carriers, we are identifying non-compliant animals destined for Dover and Folkestone ports. This partnership began in December 2015, and has since then resulted in over 800 puppies being seized and placed into quarantine.

We are also working to develop long term solutions through an intelligence led task force.

Many owners do not know the true origin of their pet. We have published guidance for owners on buying a pet responsibly, which includes advice on what to look out for. A wider public communications campaign is also being planned.

At an international level, we are currently a member of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare, which includes work on illegal dog imports.

We have also introduced new licensing regulations intended to drive up welfare standards for a range of activities involving animals, including dog breeding, which came into effect on 1 October. We have recently consulted on a proposed ban on third party sales of puppies and kittens. This would mean that those looking to buy or adopt a puppy would need to deal directly with the breeder, or with an animal rehoming centre.

Exmoor National Park

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[177199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Exmoor National Park Authority has asked for a legal opinion on expanding its present boundaries.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Exmoor National Park Authority has not sought a legal opinion on expanding its present boundaries from Defra. It would be for Exmoor National Park Authority to seek its own legal advice on this matter. Ministers are not aware if it has sought such advice from elsewhere.

Fisheries

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[186974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support his Department has provided to the fishing sector to help it plan for the UK leaving the EU.

George Eustice:

The Fisheries White Paper, 'Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations', charts the course for a sustainable and profitable fishing industry.

The introduction of the Fisheries Bill is an important step in regaining full control of our waters, setting fishing opportunities and managing fisheries sustainably.

Negotiations with the EU have confirmed the intention that the UK will continue to participate in all EU programmes financed by the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) until their closure.

In the event of no deal being reached, the Chancellor announced on 24 July 2018 that all EMFF projects approved before the closure date of the current programme (December 2020) will be fully funded under a Treasury guarantee. This guarantee applies across the UK.

Work to consider the longer-term future of all funding programmes that are currently managed by the EU is underway.

We have published a technical notice about how the commercial fishing industry would be affected if the UK leaves the EU without a deal in March 2019.

■ Fly-tipping: Rural Areas

David Simpson: [184924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to prevent fly tipping in rural areas.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Policies to tackle fly-tipping are devolved. In England, the government is committed to tackling fly-tipping in rural and urban areas. Local authorities and the Environment Agency have a wide range of enforcement powers to tackle fly-tipping and we have recently strengthened these. In 2016 we gave local authorities the power to issue fixed penalty notices for small scale fly-tipping and enhanced local authorities' and Environment Agency's ability to search and seize the vehicles of suspected fly-tippers.

This year we consulted on the power to issue fixed penalty notices to householders who fail in their duty of care and pass their waste to fly-tippers. Two thirds of fly-tipping incidents involve household waste so this will help address the main source of the crime. Subject to parliamentary approval this new power will be available to local authorities and the Environment Agency later this year. We will also support local authorities in increasing householders' awareness of their duty of care to ensure their waste is disposed of properly.

Horses: Animal Welfare

Jo Stevens: [187056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to review its policy on the tethering of horses, donkeys, ponies and their hybrids; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of (a) making guidance on tethering enforceable by Environmental Officers, (b) introducing a time-limit on tethering and (c) making it an offence to tether an animal in a location that poses a danger to the animal or the public.

David Rutley:

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) it is an offence to fail to provide for an animal's welfare or to cause it any unnecessary suffering. The 2006 Act is backed up by the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids (the Code). The Code provides owners and keepers with information on how to meet the welfare needs of their horses and includes a specific section on how to tether a horse. Local authorities have powers under the 2006 Act to investigate allegations of cruelty or poor welfare. In addition, welfare organisations such as the RPSCA and World Horse Welfare (WHW) may also investigate such matters. If anyone is concerned about the way a horse has been tethered they should report the matter either to the relevant local authority or to the RSPCA or WHW who can investigate.

Incinerators

Preet Kaur Gill: [185136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on the level of waste incineration in the UK of the UK leaving the EU.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government has not commissioned an assessment of the type described.

Incinerators: Health Hazards

Preet Kaur Gill: [185135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) leaders of local authorities and (b) metro mayors on the harmful release of nitrogen oxides from waste incinerators.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government has not had any recent discussions with leaders of local authorities or the metropolitan mayors about the release of nitrogen oxides from waste incinerators.

■ Nature Conservation: Planning Permission

Rosie Cooper: [185552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of planning laws to protect wildlife habitats.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The key statutory provisions to protect wildlife habitats are set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. These protections are also reflected in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, which, following public consultation, has been amended to offer further protections for ancient woodland and other irreplaceable habitat, while also strengthening requirements for biodiversity net gain.

Defra has undertaken a review of the effectiveness of the regulations that implement the EU Nature Directives in England. The review's findings were published in March 2012. The review did not identify a need to amend the statutory provisions but led to a number of improvements in regard to implementation.

Solid Fuels: Heating

Philip Davies: [184900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many written responses he received to the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We have received approximately 500 responses to the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood.

Philip Davies: [184901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to announce the results of the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I intend to announce the results of the consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood in due course.

Philip Davies: [184905]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will respond to Early Day Motion 1711, tabled on 17 October 2018, entitled proposed ban on burning of house coal and wet wood; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

I am aware of the hon. Member's Early Day Motion. Our consultation on a proposed ban on the sale of house coal and wet wood sold in small volumes closed in October and we are now analysing responses. As part of this we will be considering points raised by a wide range of stakeholders and others.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Asim Omer

Dr David Drew: [185484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Sudanese counterpart on the detention of Asim Omer.

Harriett Baldwin:

The British Embassy has raised the case of Asim Omer repeatedly with the Government of Sudan. In recent months there have been intensive discussions between Mr Omer's representatives and the family of the deceased. The British Embassy has not intervened in this private process. The British Embassy has attended Mr Omer's court hearings, including the most recent on 30 October. We continue to be concerned by reports by activists that Mr Omer has been subject to mistreatment in custody.

Bahrain: Administration of Justice

Karen Lee: [186435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Special Investigation Unit in Bahrain receives training from organisations funded by the UK Government.

Alistair Burt:

The Government works with a number of implementation partners and beneficiaries to support Bahraini-led reform. These programmes aim to support progress on building effective and accountable institutions, strengthening the rule of law, and justice reform. All of our work is in line with international standards, and aims to share the UK's expertise and experience. Any training provided by, or on behalf of, the British Government fully complies with our domestic and international human rights obligations. As many projects and programme activities deliver across the region, it is not possible to provide a breakdown according to each beneficiary state.

Burma: Human Rights

Jeremy Lefroy: [185069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report entitled, Stable and Secure? An Assessment on the Current Context of Human Rights for Chin People in Myanmar/Burma, published by the Chin Human Rights Organisation in September 2018.

Mark Field:

We are aware of this published report. Since August, UK officials have consulted UNHCR in Geneva and in Burma for clarification on the needs assessment process for Chin refugees residing in other countries, and UNHCR's proposed process for ensuring their safe return to Burma. The UK will continue to monitor this process in line with our objective of ensuring the safety of all those displaced by violence in Burma and a safe return process for all groups forced to flee to other countries.

Burundi: Visits Abroad

Andrew Rosindell: [186248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on what date a Minister in his Department last visited the Republic of Burundi; and what issues were discussed during that visit.

Harriett Baldwin:

The then Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) Baroness Anelay visited the Republic of Burundi on 16 February 2017. The Minister encouraged the Government of Burundi to engage in the East African Community led dialogue to resolve the political crisis. Human rights, sexual and gender based violence, governance and the role of civil society were also discussed.

Cameroon: Ethnic Groups and Languages

Jo Stevens: [187055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department made of trends in the level of reported ethnic and linguistic tensions in Cameroon in the last three years.

Harriett Baldwin:

Cameroon is a highly ethnically diverse and bilingual country with over 250 ethnic groups and English and French as official languages. The violence in the Anglophone regions is not founded in ethnic roots, but generates from perceived marginalisation of the Anglophone minority. The UK is deeply concerned at the deteriorating violence, deaths and displacement of people which has increased since the end of 2016 with severe effect on civilians. We are working closely with the wider international community, including the UN, to build as full and accurate a picture as possible. The UK continues to raise our concerns with the Government of Cameroon to take urgent action to call for restraint and to end violence on all sides.

Central African Republic: EU External Relations

Stephen Gethins: [186373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has for continued cooperation with the EU in the Central African Republic.

Harriett Baldwin:

We will continue to support international efforts to tackle the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) following the UK's departure from the EU. The UK currently contributes financially to the EU's training mission in CAR and we remain fully supportive of ongoing EU engagement, which plays a valuable role in training the armed forces of CAR to help bring peace and stability to the country. The UK is a leading contributor to the UN Peacekeeping Mission in CAR – around £40 million for the current mandate. We have also spent £111 million since 2013, tackling the humanitarian crisis.

China: Organs

[184949] Shabana Mahmood:

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Chinese government on allegations that organ harvesting continues to be practised in China.

Mark Field:

We are aware of reports that allege that a process of involuntary organ removal may be taking place in China, including suggestions that minority and religious groups are being specifically targeted. The UK government fully supports the Declaration of Istanbul (May 2008), which encourages all countries to draw up legal and professional frameworks to govern organ donation and transplantation activities.

As the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, stated in a Westminster Hall debate in October 2016: "Although I do not doubt the need to maintain close scrutiny of organ transplant practices in China, we believe that the evidence base is not sufficiently strong to substantiate claims about the systematic harvesting of organs from minority groups. Indeed, based on all the evidence available to us, we cannot conclude that this practice of "organ harvesting" is definitely happening in China."

The World Health Organisation (WHO) collates global data on organ donations and works with China. The WHO view is that China is implementing an ethical, voluntary organ transplant system in accordance with international standards, although the WHO does have concerns about overall transparency.

We continue to review any new evidence that is presented to us.

Jim Shannon: [185605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the merits of the evidence collected by former Canadian Minister David Kilgour on forced organ harvesting in China.

Mark Field:

We are aware of reports that allege that a process of involuntary organ removal may be taking place in China, including suggestions that minority and religious groups are being specifically targeted. The UK government fully supports the Declaration of Istanbul (May 2008), which encourages all countries to draw up legal and professional frameworks to govern organ donation and transplantation activities.

We consider the Kilgour, Gutmann and Matas report to be important sources of information about China's organ transplant system. These reports rightly question the lack of transparency in China's organ transplant system, whilst acknowledging that it is very difficult to identify the source of those organs and verify the number of organ transplants conducted in China. We do not agree with the claims of systematic organ harvesting of prisoners of conscience, assessing that the evidence they present does not substantiate such a claim.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) collates global data on organ donations and works with China. The WHO view is that China is implementing an ethical, voluntary organ transplant system in accordance with international standards, although the WHO does have concerns about overall transparency.

We continue to review any new evidence that is presented to us.

Jim Shannon: [<u>185606</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the merits of the conclusions of the people's independent tribunal on forced organ harvesting in China.

Mark Field:

We are aware of reports that allege that a process of involuntary organ removal may be taking place in China, including suggestions that minority and religious groups are being specifically targeted. The UK government fully supports the Declaration of Istanbul (May 2008), which encourages all countries to draw up legal and professional frameworks to govern organ donation and transplantation activities.

As the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, stated in a Westminster Hall debate in October 2016: "Although I do not doubt the need to maintain close scrutiny of organ transplant practices in China, we believe that the evidence base is not sufficiently strong to substantiate claims about the systematic harvesting of organs from minority groups. Indeed, based on all the evidence available to us, we cannot conclude that this practice of "organ harvesting" is definitely happening in China."

The World Health Organisation (WHO) collates global data on organ donations and works with China. The WHO view is that China is implementing an ethical, voluntary organ transplant system in accordance with international standards, although the WHO does have concerns about overall transparency.

We continue to review any new evidence that is presented to us.

■ Commonwealth: LGBT People

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[186948]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote the protection of LGBT rights in each member state of the Commonwealth.

Mark Field:

We continue to raise the importance of countering discrimination within the Commonwealth, including on grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation. In her speech to the Commonwealth Forums on 17 April, my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister set out the UK's readiness to support any member state wanting to reform outdated legislation that makes discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or sexual orientation possible. The Prime Minister was clear that while we must respect one another's cultures and traditions, we must do so in a manner consistent with our common value of equality, a value that is clearly stated in the Commonwealth Charter. We have since announced a £5.6m programme working with civil society organisations to support those countries who might wish to reform discriminatory legislation. Due to the highly sensitive and sometimes dangerous nature of this work, it would not be appropriate to name specific member states.

Gaza: Death

Richard Burden: [186928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the (a) progress, (b)

independence and (c) transparency of investigations into (i) the use of live fire and (ii) related deaths on the Gaza border in 2018.

Alistair Burt:

As the Prime Minister made clear to the Israeli Prime Minister in June, the UK believes there is a need for Israel to carry out a transparent, independent inquiry into protests in Gaza. During my visit to Israel in May, I also stressed the need for an independent investigation with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Hotovely and Israeli Minister for Regional Cooperation Hanegbi. Our Ambassador to Israel regularly discusses the situation in Gaza with Israeli officials, urging action to improve the situation. We welcome news that Israel has opened a criminal investigation into the case of Razan al Najjar.

Richard Burden: [186933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of international involvement in Israeli investigations on the use of live fire and related deaths on the Gaza border in 2018.

Alistair Burt:

We have not made an assessment of this matter. The UK has encouraged Israel to carry out a transparent inquiry into the Israel Defence Forces' conduct at the border fence, and to demonstrate how this will achieve a sufficient level of independence.

■ Great Lakes Region: Slavery

Andrew Rosindell: [186243]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of levels of racism on modern slavery and human trafficking in the African Great Lakes Region.

Harriett Baldwin:

The British Government is committed to the eradication of all forms of modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking by 2030, as unanimously adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the UK is funding projects on the prevention of child labour in artisanal mines and on remediation work for victims of slavery in the extractive sector. We have not assessed the specific effect of levels of racism on modern slavery and human trafficking in the Great Lakes Region.

Human Rights

Steve Double: [185635]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK embassies have reported progress on the implementation of the Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

Mark Field:

The Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, updated and issued to the diplomatic network in 2017, are a guide to UK Embassies and High Commissions to steer them in their work and contact with Human Rights Defenders. It is for individual Embassies and High Commissions to determine how they use the Guidelines depending on the local context they are working in. Not all missions will use the Guidelines in the same way and many were already doing much of the work suggested. We engage with Human Rights Defenders on a range of topics and the benefits the Guidelines have delivered will be embedded in reports on this work, rather than being reported separately.

Hungary: Illegal Immigrants

Anneliese Dodds: [187138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Hungarian counterpart on the potential implications for UK NGO employees of that country's stop soros legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The British Embassy in Budapest and senior FCO officials maintain regular dialogue with the Hungarian MFA, including on the Stop Soros legislative package and matters relating to civil society.

■ Iran: International Military Services

Tulip Siddiq: [185139]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will conduct a risk assessment for (a) UK nationals living in Iran and (b) UK nationals working for UK institutions in Iran of the forthcoming IMS Ltd arbitration hearing.

Alistair Burt:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides foreign travel advice for 225 countries and territories to help British nationals living or travelling overseas to make informed decisions about their travel plans. We keep all our travel advice, including for Iran, under constant review to ensure it reflects our current assessment of the risks to British nationals. Our travel advice for Iran makes clear that, currently, British nationals face greater risks in Iran than nationals of many other countries. Any decision to travel to another country is for an individual to take on their own responsibility, after informing themselves of the risks they may face.

■ Islamic State: Yazidis

Emily Thornberry: [186261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his UN counterpart on accelerating the work of the investigative team on the enslavement of Yazidi women and girls by Daesh.

Alistair Burt:

The UN Investigative Team that will gather evidence of Daesh's crimes in Iraq has been set up and is preparing for its deployment to Iraq. It will gather evidence of Daesh crimes, including those against the Yezidi community; it aims to secure justice for all Daesh's victims, regardless of their religion or belief.

The Team is following established UN processes in order to prepare for deployment. We are in regular contact with the UN and the Head of the Team to ensure the Team deploys as quickly as possible, and to ensure that the Team is sufficiently prepared for its deployment in order to be effective. The Special Adviser leading the Team has visited Iraq twice to meet with the Government of Iraq to prepare the ground for his important work.

Israel: Hamas

Nigel Dodds: [<u>185536</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has taken with international partners to help stem violence against Israel by Hamas.

Alistair Burt:

We strongly condemn all acts of terrorism and call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. The UK proscribes Hamas' military wing and continues to abide by a no-contact policy with Hamas in its entirety. We expect Hamas to adhere to the Quartet Principles, including a commitment to non-violence.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Richard Burden: [186929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he has taken to encourage all parties to engage with the UN Human Rights Council commission of inquiry on the 2018 protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Alistair Burt:

Our position on the need for an independent and transparent investigation into events in Gaza is clear. The UK continues to call on all parties to engage constructively with the UN Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.

Libya: Terrorism

Lady Hermon: [186239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress he has made on securing compensation from the Libyan authorities for the victims of Gaddafi-sponsored IRA terrorism; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

We want to see a just solution for all of the victims of IRA terrorism. We continue to press the Libyan authorities to engage constructively with victims and their representatives in their campaign for compensation. In August, the Secretary of State for International Development raised this with Libyan Prime Minister Serraj. In April, I discussed it with Prime Minister Serraj and the Ministers of the Interior, Justice and Foreign Affairs. The violence and instability in Libya represent significant obstacles to the resolution of legacy issues. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is also working with other Government Departments to explore what more the Government could do to support victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism.

Maher Al-Khabbaz

Karen Lee: [186436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the case of Bahraini death row inmate and torture victim Maher Al-Khabbaz has been recorded in line with his Department's torture and mistreatment reporting guidance.

Alistair Burt:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office registers details of alleged torture whenever this comes to the attention of a UK official in the course of their duties, in line with the UK Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance.

We continue to follow the case of Maher al-Khabbaz and, where we have concerns, we raise them at a senior level with the Government of Bahrain.

Marine Environment: Conservation

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[185068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his policy is on global ocean conservation.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The ocean is vital for life on earth and the prosperity and security of the United Kingdom. The UK and its Overseas Territories are custodians to the fifth-largest marine estate in the world. My department therefore has a very important role in promoting security at sea and improving the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans. We already take a leading role on maritime protection and are on track to deliver marine protected areas across nearly 4 million square kilometres of the planet's ocean and seas through our Blue Belt programme by 2020.

Activities supported by the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme are helping to deliver the UK's global commitments to the Commonwealth marine environment and tackling climate change, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, the Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Paris Climate Change Accord.

However, our ocean is shared, and it is only through international cooperation that global ocean conservation will be delivered. That is why at the United Nations

General Assembly this September, the Government called for 30 per cent of the world's oceans to be protected within Marine Protected Areas by 2030 and why we are committed to negotiations for a new Implementing Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We are also working on an International Ocean Strategy, which will provide the government with a blueprint for international action on all fronts that will support the long term prosperity of the UK and reaffirm our long term commitment to the health of the marine environment.

Middle East: Peace Negotiations

Emily Thornberry: [186272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the US administration has supplied his Department with the United States' Middle East peace plan.

Alistair Burt:

We have not yet seen the detail of the United States' Middle East peace plan. We continue to encourage the United States' Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for a viable Israel-Palestinian peace agreement that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties. We believe the best way to achieve this is through substantive peace talks between the parties leading to a two-state solution based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

■ Pakistan: Forced Marriage

Emily Thornberry: [186271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the accessibility of consular support for UK citizens that are victims of forced marriage in Pakistan.

Harriett Baldwin:

Forced marriage is a terrible form of abuse, and this Government is clear that we will not allow political or cultural sensitivities to get in the way of tackling it. The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint unit run by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Home Office. It provides support and advice for victims, those at risk, and professionals, through its public helpline during office hours. Outside these hours, those at risk anywhere in the world can speak to a consular officer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling their British Embassy, Consulate or High Commission, or the FCO in London on 0207 008 1500. Our High Commission in Islamabad, working closely with the FMU, has also delivered a targeted outreach programme to raise awareness of forced marriage and where to go for help, including using a number of billboards across Pakistan to advertise the consular assistance available to British nationals at risk of forced marriage.

South Africa: British Nationals Abroad

Philip Davies: [187000]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2018 to Question 181215 on South Africa: British Nationals Abroad, what steps are being taken to identify UK expatriates living in South Africa who will be affected by the motion to confiscate land without compensation.

Harriett Baldwin:

I refer to my previous answer of 25 October. It is not possible to make a meaningful assessment of the impact of a future land reform programme, including on UK nationals living in South Africa, until that programme has been formulated and set out by the South African Government.

Sri Lanka: Foreign Relations

Keith Vaz: [185502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on what date did he last spoke with his Sri Lankan counterpart.

Mark Field:

I met Foreign Minister Marapana on the 6 of October 2018 in Colombo.

Sri Lanka: Human Rights

Keith Vaz: [185501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the protection of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Mark Field:

I made statements on 26 and 29 October setting out our concerns at political developments in Sri Lanka and calling for due political process to be upheld. The FCO condems any reported intimidation of journalists and TV stations.

The UK is committed to supporting human rights and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans. While we welcome some recent progress against its UN Human Rights Council commitments, more remains to be done. I visited Colombo in early October, where I urged the government to make more progress, including towards the establishment of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms; constitutional reform; and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). I also met the leader of the Tamil National Alliance, as well as human rights and civil society activists. In August we announced £1m of extra UK funding to support resettlement of wardisplaced families in the north and east of the country.

Sri Lanka: Politics and Government

Keith Vaz: [185499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Sri Lanka.

Mark Field:

I am concerned by the fast developing political situation in Sri Lanka. I have called on all parties to ensure that the constitution is respected and due political and legal process upheld. I urge the President, in consultation with the Speaker, to reconvene parliament immediately to give the democratically elected representatives of the Sri Lankan people their voice. The UK will continue to urge Sri Lanka to implement fully the commitments it made to the UN Human Rights Council.

Keith Vaz: [185500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his department is taking to support an orderly transfer of power in Sri Lanka following the recent elections in that country.

Mark Field:

There have been no recent national elections in Sri Lanka. I am nevertheless concerned by the ongoing political situation and have publicly called for the President, in consultation with the Speaker, to convene the Sri Lankan parliament immediately to give the democratically elected representatives of the Sri Lankan people their voice.

Sri Lanka: Tamils

Keith Vaz: [185496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Sri Lankan counterpart on the status of Tamil people.

Mark Field:

The UK remains firmly committed to the full implementation of UN Human Rights Council Resolution 34/1, under which Sri Lanka committed to implement a range of measures to provide for human rights, truth-seeking and reconciliation following the end of its civil war. I encouraged Foreign Minister Marapana, officials and others to continue to make progress on these commitments when I visited Colombo in the first week of October 2018. Our High Commission in Sri Lanka regularly travel to the North and East and meet with local groups, and where we have specific human rights concerns we raise these with the Sri Lankan government.

Keith Vaz: [185497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Deputy General of the Commonwealth on the status of Tamil people in Sri Lanka.

Mark Field:

We have not recently discussed the status of Tamil people in Sri Lanka with the Secretary General of the Commonwealth. However, we welcomed her visit to Colombo in August, during which she offered Commonwealth support on good governance and accountability.

The UK is committed to supporting human rights and reconciliation for all Sri Lankans. While we welcome some recent progress against its UN Human Rights Council commitments, more remains to be done. I visited Colombo in October where I urged the government to make more progress, including towards the establishment of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms; devolution through constitutional reform; and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. I also met Tamil National Alliance leader and human rights and civil society activists. In August we announced £1 million of extra UK funding to support resettlement of wardisplaced families in the predominantly Tamil north and east. Total UK funding is now £7.9 million for 2016-2019.

Keith Vaz: [185498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the President of Sri Lanka on the security of Tamil communities in that country.

Mark Field:

I have not had recent discussions with President Sirisena. However, in my visit to Colombo in early October I encouraged Foreign Minister Marapana, officials and others to continue to make progress on Sri Lanka's human rights and reconciliation commitments when I visited Colombo in October 2018.

Our High Commissioner met with President Sirisena on 1 November to raise our concerns at recent political developments.

Sudan: Armed Conflict

Dr David Drew: [185486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of reports of attacks by the Government of Sudan on Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid positions in Jebel Marra.

Harriett Baldwin:

The UK is deeply concerned by reports of recent clashes in the Jebel Marra region of Darfur between the Sudan Liberation Movement Abdel Wahid (SLA-AW) and Government forces. In particular, we are concerned by the impact on the civilian population and reports that the Government is preventing access for UNAMID and humanitarian actors. We have raised this issue repeatedly with the Government of Sudan, most recently on 31 October when our Ambassador to Sudan discussed the issue with the Undersecretary at the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We will continue to urge all parties to end military action, to allow unfettered access for UNAMID and humanitarian actors, and to engage meaningfully in the peace process to secure a permanent ceasefire agreement.

Sudan: Military Attachés

Dr David Drew: [<u>185485</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the military attaché from the British Embassy in Khartoum attended the graduation ceremony of Rapid Support Forces officers in May 2017.

Harriett Baldwin:

As part of his official duties the then British Defence Attache to Sudan, alongside fellow international Defence Attaches based in Khartoum, attended a Sudanese Armed Forces military parade in May 2017. The Rapid Support Forces formally joined the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in January 2017, and their graduation ceremony therefore took place during the parade under the auspices of the SAF, although this had not been made clear in advance.

■ Syria: Ahrar al-Sham

Emily Thornberry: [186267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the size of Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib; and what proportion of the overall Syrian rebel strength that groups represents in that area.

Alistair Burt:

We estimate that there are approximately 50-70,000 armed opposition fighters in Idlib and the surrounding area, of which 10-20,000 belong to Hayat Tahrir-al Sham. The total civilian population of Idlib at present is around 3 million.

Syria: Christianity

Andrew Rosindell: [186246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to enable Christians to remain in Syria.

Alistair Burt:

As a member of the UN Security Council and the Syria Small Group, the UK is working in support of a political settlement to the conflict that protects all Syrians, including Christians and other minority groups. We have consistently called for members of religious minorities to be protected, including through the Syria resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council, on which the UK leads. We are also at the forefront of the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, providing life-saving support to millions of Syrians from all communities, supporting them to remain in the region.

■ Tanzania: Poaching

Andrew Rosindell: [186247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Tanzanian counterpart on reducing poaching activity in that country.

Harriett Baldwin:

Combatting the Illegal Wildlife Trade, including reducing poaching, was most recently discussed with the Tanzanian Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs during the Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in London on 11 and 12 October 2018. It was also raised by the Secretary of State for International Development when she met the President of Tanzania during her visit to Dar Es Salaam on 9-10 August 2018.

■ Tanzania: Visits Abroad

Andrew Rosindell: [186249]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on what date a Minister in his Department last visited the Republic of Tanzania; and what issues were discussed during that visit.

Harriett Baldwin:

The former Minister for Africa, Rory Stewart, visited Tanzania on 22 and 23 August 2017. The Secretary of State for International Development also visited on 9 and 10 August 2018. Issues discussed during both visits included prosperity, democratic space, security and combatting the Illegal Wildlife Trade.

Yemen: Airports

Keith Vaz: [184870]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the leadership of the Saudi-Emirati coalition on the closure of Saana and Aden airports.

Alistair Burt:

We have consistently encouraged all parties to support UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths' efforts to agree confidence-building measures between the conflict parties, including the re-opening of Sana'a airport. The Foreign Secretary met his counterparts from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, in a meeting of the Quad on 27 September at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In the context of a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, they discussed how we could provide greater assistance to the Yemeni people by facilitating the entry of humanitarian and commercial goods into Yemen. I also discussed these matters with Saudi Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir, Emirati Deputy Foreign Minister Gargash, and US Defence Secretary Mattis in the margins of the Manama Dialogue on 27 October.

Yemen: Baha'i Faith

Dame Louise Ellman: [186957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations has he made to his Yemeni counterpart on incitement against members of the Baha'i community in that country; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt:

We continue to follow the treatment of the Baha'is in Yemen closely, including through meeting their representatives in the UK and lobbying the relevant authorities. Yemen is a human rights priority country for the UK, and the persecution of individuals on the basis of their religious beliefs is a serious violation of international human rights law. We are concerned by reports of arbitrary detention of members of the Baha'i community, and abuse of detainees, in areas of Yemen under Houthi control. We wholly condemn this mistreatment. We are working closely with our partners to raise these concerns directly with the Houthi authorities and press for the release of detained individuals.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Keith Vaz: [184867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Saudi counterpart on military escalation in the province of Hudaydah.

Alistair Burt:

We are in regular contact with the Coalition about the need to ensure that any further military operations in and around Hodeidah are conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law, including on the protection of civilians, and do not disrupt commercial and humanitarian flows through the port. The Foreign Secretary met his counterparts from the United States, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on 27 September at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. In the context of a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, they discussed how we could provide greater assistance to the Yemeni people by facilitating the entry of humanitarian and commercial goods into Yemen. I also discussed these matters with Saudi Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir, Emirati Deputy Foreign Minister Gargash, and US Defence Secretary Mattis in the margins of the Manama Dialogue on 27 October.

Keith Vaz: [184869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had on Yemen with the leaders of the Quint nations.

Alistair Burt:

The Foreign Secretary and I have raised Yemen regularly with Saudi, Emirati, Omani and US counterparts in recent months. I spoke to Saudi Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir; Emirati Foreign Minister Gargash and US Defence Secretary Mattis on 28 October in the margins of the Manama Dialogue about how we can end the conflict. The former

Foreign Secretary hosted the last meeting of the Quint on 28 November 2017 and the Foreign Secretary most recently hosted a meeting of the Quad (UK, US, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates) on 27 September in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, to make progress towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Dr David Drew: [185487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment has he made of the contribution of the Sudan Defence Force to the conflict in Yemen; and whether he had made representations to his Sudanese counterpart to seek an early withdrawal of those troops.

Alistair Burt:

We understand that Sudan is contributing troops to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, though we do not have an assessment of the numbers of troops on the ground or their roles. We continue to urge all sides to engage with the UN-led peace process.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Alprazolam: Misuse

Bambos Charalambous:

[185105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information the Care Quality Commissioned has obtained through its inspections on (a) how the controlled drug Xanax is managed within health and care services and (b) the failures that lead to the diversion of Xanax to the criminal market.

Caroline Dinenage:

Alprazolam (available under the trade name Xanax) has very limited availability on the National Health Service. As a consequence, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) sees very little of it on its inspection of health and care services. The CQC would only come across it through inspection of its independent providers, from which it is not currently aware of any concerns.

The CQC is aware of alprazolam misuse through attendance at NHS England led Controlled Drug Local Intelligence Networks. Concerns have been raised by police controlled drug liaison officers at these meetings but these relate to alprazolam which they believe is being obtained by other means, not by diversion from the legal supply chain.

Bambos Charalambous:

[185106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 23 October 2018 to Question 181292 on Mental Illness: Children and Young People, what assessment he has made of the level of incidences of the misuse of Xanax on the recorded attendances to A&E in the last eight years.

Steve Brine:

Information on misuse of Xanax by those attending accident and emergency is not collected centrally, therefore no such assessment has been made.

Antibiotics: Drug Resistance

Kevin Hollinrake: [185000]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March 2018 to Question 132264 on Antibiotics: Drug Resistance, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of including (a) the latest electronic technology to reduce hospital infections and (b) other best practice on hand hygiene compliance in the prevention strand of the new antimicrobial resistance strategy.

Steve Brine:

Infection prevention and control will remain a key pillar of the United Kingdom's upcoming five-year national action plan on antimicrobial resistance.

NHS Improvement, who lead on infection prevention and control, has included a hand hygiene monitoring and compliance workstream in its current work programme.

NHS Improvement has undertaken a rapid review of evidence on the use of electronic monitoring devices across the National Health Service to determine hand hygiene compliance. The technology used in some trusts is currently reliant on local data infrastructure and many existing systems would not be able to support it.

Breast Cancer

Nic Dakin: [184978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hospital trusts (a) collect and (b) submit data on the number of people diagnosed with secondary breast cancer to the cancer outcomes and services data set.

Nic Dakin: [184979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure hospital trusts meet the requirement to (a) collect and (b) submit data on secondary breast cancer.

Steve Brine:

140 hospital trusts submitted data for 2016 secondary breast cancer diagnoses through the Cancer Outcomes and Services Dataset or Cancer Waiting Times data collection mechanisms. The total number submitted was 11,608, which is an increase on 2014 and 2015. This is accepted as being significantly below the estimated number of secondary breast cancers.

The National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service (NCRAS) has published a number of guidance documents including flowcharts and clearer data definitions, providing specific advice on how to record cancer patients who are on a non-primary pathway. NCRAS is visiting trusts to support the use of this guidance.

NCRAS is working closely with cancer charities to improve data collection and submission by hospital trusts, looking at how they can help improve completion rates and thus gain a better picture of the burden of recurrence and metastatic disease across the health service.

To further support this work NCRAS has been sharing provider-level data on the completeness of recurrence reporting with individual NHS trusts since July 2016. These data are publicly available at the following link:

http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer_type_and_topic_specific_work/topic_specific_work/rec urrence

Cystic Hygroma

Jim Shannon: [184960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the incidence of cystic hygroma in each of the last five years.

Steve Brine:

Data on the incidence and prevalence of cystic hygroma in England has only been collected since 2015 by the National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service (NCARDRS) at Public Health England.

Based on data collected by NCARDRS, the prevalence figures for cystic hygroma were approximately four per 10,000 in 2015 and four per 10,000 in 2016. Completed 2017 data will be available in February 2019.

Department of Health and Social Care: Apprentices

David Linden: [185741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many apprentices are employed in his Department.

Caroline Dinenage:

As at 31 October 2018, the Department has 52 apprentices on learning programmes.

Department of Health and Social Care: Pay

David Linden: [185761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £8.75 per hour.

Caroline Dinenage:

On 31 October 2018, no individuals employed by the Department were paid less than £8.75 per hour.

David Linden: [185781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £10.20 per hour.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department operates different pay rates for staff based in London and those based elsewhere. On 31st October 2018, eight individuals working in the Department were paid less than £10.20 per hour. All of these individuals were based outside London. All staff in London were paid £10.20 per hour or more.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Private Finance Initiative

Chris Ruane: [186961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of his Department's projected spend on PFI contracts in 2028.

Stephen Barclay:

For the financial year 2028/29 the total of estimated Private Finance Initiative (PFI) unitary payments for those projects in the Hospitals and Acute Health sector is £2.52 billion (or £2,515,600,000).

Information on the estimated revenue payments for the lifetime of each PFI contract can be found on HM Treasury's website at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-finance-initiative-and-private-finance-2-projects-2017-summary-data

Future estimated annual PFI unitary payments for each year of a PFI contract are subject to meeting agreed performance and quality standards, contractual variations agreed between the parties, and include an annual increment for inflation, the impact of which can vary between schemes depending on the contract provisions for when it is actually applied during the year.

Department of Health and Social Care: Social Media

Tulip Siddiq: [185025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent from the public purse on promoted content on (a) Twitter, (b) Facebook and (c) Instagram in each month since June 2017.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department does not routinely pay for promoted content on social media channels and the communications directorate has not directly commissioned any promoted activity on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram since June 2017.

However, the Department has co-funded a National Health Service recruitment campaign with NHS England. Between July and September 2018 the campaign spend across social media was £93,416 and in October 2018 it was £56,147.18.

Drugs: Rehabilitation

Jim Shannon: [185077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of the ring-fenced Public Health Grant to Local Authorities in April 2019 on the provision of substance misuse services.

Steve Brine:

The ring-fenced public health grant for local authorities in England will stay in place for 2019/20. Local authorities remain responsible for identifying and meeting the need for substance misuse services in their areas.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Philip Davies: [184899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether heated tobacco products will be included in the annual Public Health England report on e-cigarettes; and when that report will be published.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England (PHE) will continue to publish its annual independent academic reviews of the evidence on e-cigarettes up to the end of the Parliament in 2022. The reviews will cover new evidence from research into the health risks of e-cigarettes, including in relation to flavourings in e-liquids. The most recent review, published in February 2018, considered the available literature for heated tobacco products but evidence for these products was in its infancy and mainly published by the tobacco industry.

PHE welcomes and supports researchers to publish their findings on heated tobacco products and will consider whether there is enough new evidence to provide a synthesis in each of the future annual evidence reviews.

The next review is planned for publication early in 2019.

Fertility: Medical Treatments

Nic Dakin: [<u>185587</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department takes to (a) support fertility treatment in the NHS and (b) ensure NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups deliver fertility treatments in line with NICE guidelines.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) should have regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline on the assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems when commissioning services for which they are responsible. This includes the recommendation in the guideline that three cycles of in-vitro fertilisation be offered to qualifying couples where the woman is under the age of 40 and one cycle where the woman is between the ages of 40 and 42.

The NICE guideline is evidence based best practice for clinicians but is not mandatory. The availability of National Health Service funded fertility treatment is and always has been a matter for local determination. Decisions on the level of service provision are underpinned by clinical insight and knowledge of local healthcare needs and priorities.

NHS England is currently undertaking a project to develop a benchmark price for NHS in-vitro fertilisation. This will help CCGs improve value for money in their commissioning. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority are finalising some good practice advice for CCGs about the commissioning of fertility services, which should help improve the quality of commissioning decisions.

■ Grenfell Tower: Fires

Mr David Lammy: [184848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has been made of the risks to the health of survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire of their exposure to smoke and dust.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England (PHE) is continuing to commission monitoring for pollutants that have both short and long-term effects, to assess whether there is any risk to public health as a result of the Grenfell fire.

PHE will keep local people updated with results. Individuals who were directly impacted by the smoke and who were admitted to hospital are being followed up by respiratory physicians at Imperial College NHS Trust.

■ Haemophilia: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [184968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who the board members are for NHS England's national tender for (a) factor VIII and (b) factor IX haemophilia products; which of those board members represent (i) the Northern Ireland Executive and (ii) organisations involved in Northern Ireland; and whether the board has met in Northern Ireland.

Steve Brine:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 4 September 2018 to Question 167275.

Jim Shannon: [184969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people who were in receipt of (a) factor VIII and (b) factor IX Extended Half Life (EHLs) products had that treatment removed for (i) clinical and (ii) non-clinical reasons in 2017-18.

Steve Brine:

NHS England does not collect or hold information on the number of patients who have switched from Factor VIII and Factor IX Extended Half Life products to other treatments for clinical or non-clinical reasons in 2017-18.

Jim Shannon: [184970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 26 June 2018 to Question 154639 on Haemophilia: Medical Treatments, if he will make a comparative assessment of treatment uptake in (a) Ireland, (b) Canada and (c) the European Union.

Steve Brine:

There are currently no plans for an assessment of comparative uptake compared to the uptake in Ireland, Canada and the European Union.

Jim Shannon: [184971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Trigger 1 of NHS England's Specialised Commissioning Briefing (Spring 2018), how the faster adoption of best value medicines requirement will affect the procurement of Extended Half Life factor VIII products; and which Factor VIII blood products will be covered by the Commissioning for Quality and Innovation.

Steve Brine:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 4 September 2018 to Question <u>167279</u>.

Health

Jim Shannon: [184966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to improve public awareness of the effect of the built environment on health and wellbeing.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England set up the Healthy Places programme in 2013 in recognition that where we live and the homes we live in have a big impact on our health and wellbeing. The programme has produced a range of publications on such impacts and developed a range of partnerships, for example with the Local Government Association and National Parks England, and programmes across national and local government which aim to raise awareness of the effect of the built environment on health and wellbeing. These publications can be seen via the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-healthy-places/healthy-places

Jim Shannon: **184967**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effect on his Department's policies on peoples health of the recommendations in the Report, Building our Future: Laying the Foundations for Healthy Homes and

Buildings, published on 24 October 2018 by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Healthy Homes and Building.

Jim Shannon: [185600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) work with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and (b) establish a cross-departmental committee on health and buildings.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department welcomes the All Party Parliamentary Group's report, and we know that a high-quality, safe, and suitable home can help people stay independent and healthy for longer, and reduce health and social care costs. The Department works across Government, including with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, on many of the issues highlighted in the report.

Both Departments are signatories to the 'Health through the Home' Memorandum of Understanding with Public Health England (PHE). A refreshed version, which emphasises the importance of housing in supporting people's health, was published by PHE in March 2018. It can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-health-and-care-through-the-home-mou

PHE also recognises the importance of indoor environmental quality (indoor air quality, noise, overheating and ventilation) on human health and wellbeing, and the need for a holistic approach. Further information is available in PHE's resources on homes and health, available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-for-health

Health Services: Learning Disability

Luciana Berger: [187013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) adults (b) children with learning disabilities or autism have been admitted to assessment and treatment units in each of the last five years.

Caroline Dinenage:

The following table shows the breakdown of inpatients with learning disabilities and/ or autism admitted to acute admission beds within specialised learning disability units by year since 2015*.

						LEARNING
						DISABILITY
						AND
	YEAR	LEARNING DIS	SABILITY	AUTISM		AUTISM
Under 18	18 and over	Under 18	18 and over	Under 18	18 and over	
2015	10	410	15	35	10	210

	YEAR	LEARNING	G DISABILITY	AUTISM		LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM
2016	15	350	30	45	5	195
2017	10	270	40	35	10	190
2018	10	145	20	10	5	115

Notes:

*NHS Digital does not hold any data prior to February 2015 for the Assuring Transformation dataset, therefore this data covers the period February 2015 to September 2018. The definition of 'acute admission beds within specialised learning disability units' provides a proxy for assessment and treatment units.

The number of data submitters varies month-on-month. If a provider regularly submits data and then doesn't submit for a given month, this can have a significant impact on the figures. Therefore, caution should be taken when interpreting the data.

Luciana Berger: [187014]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report, Building the Right Support, published in 2015, what progress his Department is to reduce the number of people with (a) learning disabilities and (b) autism being held on Assessment and Treatment Units by March 2019.

Caroline Dinenage:

Implementation of Building the Right Support has seen a reduction in the number of people with learning disability and/or autism who are mental health inpatients, from the 2,880 baseline in March 2015. This includes people who are in Assessment and Treatment Units, and other mental health inpatient settings. The number of inpatients at the end of September 2018 was 2,315.

Since 2015, there have been over 5,700 discharges into the community, including over 620 people who had previously been in hospital five years or more, and 413 inpatient beds decommissioned.

Hearing Aids: Children

Vicky Foxcroft: [185009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the length of NHS waiting times for children waiting for hearing aid repairs.

Caroline Dinenage:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Heroin: Medical Treatments

Grahame Morris: [187009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will allocate funding to local authorities that plan to implement heroin assisted treatment.

Steve Brine:

Local authorities are responsible for making decisions on how to spend their allocation of the public health grant based on the needs of their local population. Local authorities are responsible for commissioning drug treatment to meet those needs, including heroin assisted treatment services.

■ Home Care Services

Preet Kaur Gill: [185729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average price paid for home care per hour is in (a) the West Midlands and (b) England.

Caroline Dinenage:

NHS Digital data on the average hourly rate for home care services funded by local authorities shows in 2017/18 the average hourly rate paid to external providers of home care services commissioned by local authorities in England was £16.04.

In 2017/18 the average hourly rate paid to external providers of home care services commissioned by local authorities in the West Midlands was £14.96.

Source:

NHS Digital, Adult Social Care Finance Return 2017/18, Table 49 – Unit costs, average weighted standard hourly rate for the provision of home care by activity provision, year on year comparison, 2016-17 and 2017-18

https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-activity-and-finance-report/2017-18

Housing: Health

Jim Shannon: [184965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to promote public awareness of the the effect on people's health of poor quality indoor environments.

Steve Brine:

Public Health England (PHE) raises public awareness of the impacts of indoor air pollution by supporting activities that aim to change behaviour, such as the annual Clean Air Day, and is working with health partners, such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, World Health Organization and Allergy UK, to improve the evidence on the health impacts of poor indoor air quality which will enhance advice to the public. PHE also promotes awareness about carbon monoxide through the use of blog posts, press releases and social media updates.

In Vitro Fertilisation

Layla Moran: [<u>187136</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 01 November 2018 to Question 185122 on In Vitro Fertilisation, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making mandatory National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines on the assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

We have no such plans. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's clinical guidelines help healthcare professionals deliver the best possible care based on the best available evidence. They focus on aspects of healthcare that are commissioned locally.

Influenza: Vaccination

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[<u>184980</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP practices are using the flu vaccine that was supplied in winter 2017-18; and what guidance his Department has issued to GP practices on the use of that vaccine.

Steve Brine:

[Holding answer 1 November 2018]: General practitioner (GP) practices are responsible for ordering flu vaccines for their eligible adult population directly from manufacturers. Last winter most adults were offered a trivalent influenza vaccine (TIV), with some offered a quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIV).

National Health Service guidance states that GP practices are not to use TIV vaccine as part of the NHS programme for 2018/19. NHS England wrote to GPs and community pharmacies in early February 2018 asking them to review all orders for the 2018/19 season and ensure these were in line with recommended vaccines.

For 2018/19, new recommendations were made about vaccines to offer to adults. For those aged 65 and over, providers were asked to offer a newly licenced adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccine because it is a more effective vaccine for this age group. For those aged 18 to 64 years QIV was recommended as it offers protection against four strains of flu. There have been no changes in the recommended vaccine for the children's programme this year.

Bridget Phillipson: [187015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2018 to Question 183928 on Influenza: Vaccination, and with reference to the guidance, Flu Vaccination Programme Delivery Guidance 2018-19 published by NHS England, what assessment he has made of appropriateness of delivering aTIV to healthcare providers by mid-November.

Steve Brine:

The adjuvanted trivalent flu vaccine is the recommended vaccine for those aged 65 years and over because it is a more effective vaccine for this age group and should offer better protection against flu compared to those previously used in the United Kingdom programme. This is explained in the Flu Vaccination Programme Delivery Guidance 2018-19 available at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/flu-vaccination-programme-delivery-guidance-2018-19/

To ensure equitable access across the UK, deliveries of this vaccine are being phased between September and November. General practices and pharmacies were informed of the phased deliveries in April 2018 and given confirmed delivery dates in August. The supply to date has been on schedule.

With appropriate planning, all eligible patients should be able to be offered vaccine before the flu season starts.

Medical Treatments: Finance

Ben Bradley: [185103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether healthcare charities will be able to submit evidence as part of the specialised commissioning relative prioritisation process later this year.

Steve Brine:

Healthcare charities and other interested organisations have the opportunity to submit peer reviewed, published evidence, and to comment on draft clinical commissioning policies and service specifications that are being considered within the relative prioritisation process. They can do this either as a member of the policy working group, during stakeholder testing, or via a public consultation as per NHS England's Specialised Commissioning Service Development Policy.

NHS Trusts: Standards

Clive Lewis: [187096]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS trusts have ever been put in to special administration.

Stephen Barclay:

One National Health Service foundation trust has been placed into Trust Special Administration: Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust was placed into Trust Special Administration by Monitor in April 2013.

One NHS trust has been placed into Trust Special Administration: South London Healthcare NHS Trust was placed into Trust Special Administration by the then Secretary of State for Health (Andrew Lansley) in July 2012.

Postnatal Depression

Lisa Nandy: [185588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve (a) early diagnosis and (b) support for mothers experiencing postnatal depression.

Lisa Nandy: [185589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve (a) early diagnosis and (b) intervention for mothers experiencing postnatal depression.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

This Government is committed to improving perinatal mental health services for women during pregnancy and in the first postnatal year, so that women are able to access the right care at the right time and close to home.

The Department is investing £365 million from 2015/16 to 2020/21 in perinatal mental health services, and NHS England is leading a transformation programme to ensure that by 2020/21 at least 30,000 more women each year are able to access evidence-based specialist mental health care during the perinatal period.

General practitioners and primary care teams have a crucial role in supporting the identification and treatment of perinatal mental illness, including post-natal depression, and are part of an integrated pathway of services.

Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

Caroline Flint: [184873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department has allocated to the promotion of public information on prescription prepayment certificates.

Steve Brine:

The NHS Business Services Authority (BSA) actively prepares, circulates and promotes information for the public on Prescription Prepayment Certificates as part of its duties in administering this service. The funding information requested cannot be provided, as it is not separately identified.

Public Health England: Staff

Catherine West: [185151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff (a) are employed directly by, (b) are seconded to and (c) work under contract in Public Health England.

Steve Brine:

The number of staff within Public Health England (PHE), reported as both number of separate individual persons (headcount) and Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) as at 30 September 2018 are available in the following table.

	HEADCOUNT	WTE
Employed directly by PHE	5,395	5,004
Seconded to PHE	30	11.73
Work under contract in PHE*	63	61.8

Notes:

Radiotherapy

Dr Lisa Cameron: [185035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when more detail and timescales are planned to be published on NHS England's proposed networked model for radiotherapy services; and if his Department will take steps to ensure that high quality radiotherapy is available closer to people's homes.

Steve Brine:

Final service specifications setting out the detailed function and requirements of Radiotherapy Networks and Radiotherapy providers will be published shortly. The establishment of Radiotherapy Networks is designed to improve access to high quality, innovative and advanced radiotherapy, as close to home as possible.

Alongside the publication of the service specifications, NHS England will also publish a report setting out stakeholders' feedback during public consultation and NHS England's response.

Special Educational Needs

Justin Madders: [185626]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department allocated from the public purse to (a) NHS Learning Support Fund payments, (b) NHS Learning Support Fund Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses payments, (c) NHS Learning Support Fund Child Dependants Allowance payments and (d) NHS Learning Support Fund Exceptional Support Fund payments for the period 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018.

Stephen Barclay:

The Learning Support Fund (LSF) is a demand-led budget with expenditure directly linked to the number of students who receive payment and how much each student receives. The following table shows expenditure on the LSF for the 2017/18

^{*&#}x27;PHE has interpreted "work under contract" as "contingent labour".

academic year. Academic years are not the same as the financial year. Departmental budgets are set on a financial year basis. The 2017/18 academic year comprises part of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years. Work is on-going with the university sector to ensure they continue to highlight the availability of the additional non-repayable funding that is available in England to Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional undergraduate students during their study.

1 SEPTEMBER 2017 TO 31 AUGUST 2018

LSF Element	£ million	Number of Approved Applications
Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses	£1.7	7,422
Child Dependants Allowance	£3.7	4,305
Exceptional Support Fund	£0.1	214
Total	£5.5	11,941

Source: NHS Business Services Authority

Technetium

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[185721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what preparations his Department has made to ensure that there is a steady supply of Technetium-99m after the UK's leaves the EU.

Stephen Barclay:

On 23 August 2018, the Department wrote to a number of pharmaceutical companies that supply the United Kingdom with medicines from, or via, the European Union/European Economic Area, asking them to ensure they have a minimum of six weeks' additional supply in the UK, over and above their business as usual operational buffer stocks, by 29 March 2019.

Since then, we have received very good engagement from industry who share our aims of ensuring continuity of medicines supply for patients is maintained and able to cope with any potential delays at the border that may arise in the short term in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Wheelchairs: Procurement

Dr Lisa Cameron: [184972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2018 to Question 176349 on wheelchairs: procurement, if his Department will

collate information on standards in private contracts between CCGs and wheelchairs providers.

Caroline Dinenage:

NHS England does not mandate service specifications for wheelchair services, but as part of its wheelchair improvement programme has developed a model service specification in collaboration with partners (and tested with clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and wheelchair providers) which sets out the ambition for excellent wheelchair services and the specific elements CCGs need to consider when commissioning services. This was launched in July 2017.

HOME OFFICE

Asylum: Employment

Steve Double: [<u>185032</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the effect on the economy of granting asylum seekers the right to work in the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it and this Government is committed to delivering a fair and humane asylum system.

Whilst the Government has not assessed the effect on the economy of granting asylum seekers the right to work in the UK, our current policy is consistent with EU law and permits asylum seekers to work, in jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, if they have been waiting for a decision on their claim for 12 months or more and the delay is through no fault of their own. We are tackling delays in decision-making and have plans in place to improve the speed at which outstanding claims are decided.

It is important to focus on providing support for those who are recognised as refugees, to help them to integrate and find employment, so that they can rebuild their lives here.

Asylum: Housing

Alex Cunningham: [184992]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has a target for the number of local authorities participating in the asylum dispersal programme; and what contingency plans are in place should that number be insufficient.

Alex Cunningham: [184993]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information he holds on the reasons why some local authorities have not signed up to the asylum dispersal programme; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office is working closely with a wide range of local authorities to increase the number of areas across the UK that agree to accommodate and support people seeking protection.

We take a coordinated approach to the delivery of the various resettlement and asylum schemes and engage through the Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships to consider the impact on communities and local services so that adjustments can be made where appropriate. Participation in asylum dispersal is subject to discussion and agreement with individual local authorities and there is no target level of participation - every local authority is encouraged to contribute.

Gareth Snell: [185133]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the fifty fourth report of the Public Accounts Committee of Session 2013-14 entitled COMPASS: provision of asylum accommodation, HC 1000, what measures his Department have in place to respond to the lessons learned following the transition to and implementation of the COMPASS contracts in preparations for the transition to the new contracts.

Caroline Nokes:

Since the establishment of the Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation Project in the autumn of 2016, there has been extensive consideration of lessons learnt from the existing contracts, stakeholder feedback and external review documents, including the fifty fourth report from the Public Accounts Committee.

The new contracts include over 400 substantive changes that will provide a more accessible and easy to navigate system which ensures the safety, security and welfare of service users and their host communities. These changes will include a longer mobilisation and transition period; improved data quality and sharing with providers and a more robust contract compliance regime to improve accommodation standards.

Drugs: Crime

Grahame Morris: [187010]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish the terms of reference for the review of the market for illegal drugs.

Grahame Morris: [187011]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to launch a review of the market for illegal drugs.

Victoria Atkins:

On 2 October the Home Secretary announced that there will be a major independently led review of drug misuse. The Review will make sure that we know as much as possible about who drug users are, what they are taking and how often so that law enforcement agencies and the police can target and prevent the drug-related causes of violent crime effectively.

We will set out further details of the review shortly, including timescales and terms of reference.

Louise Haigh: [187083]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Department's report entitled Understanding organised crime 2015-16, published in November 2018, what assessment he has made of the reasons behind the £9.3 billion rise in the social and economic cost of drugs to society; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The social and economic cost of organised drugs supply to the UK is estimated to £20 billion for the financial year 2015/16. This is an increase of £9.3 billion compared to the previous estimate for the financial year 2010/11. This is due to:

- an increase in the unit costs used to estimate drug-related acquisitive crime;
- an increase in the volume of drug-related deaths;
- the inclusion of costs to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the National Crime Agency, and expenditure on media information activity;
- the inclusion of non-legal aid defence spending in the costs to the criminal justice system for drug possession and supply offences and, to a lesser extent, the opportunity cost of jurors' time,

Given much of the change in cost is attributable to changes in methodology, the 2015/16 estimate is not directly comparable with the 2010/11 estimate. Most of the change should not therefore be interpreted as a worsening of the overall situation.

The Government's new Serious and Organised Crime Strategy emphasises the importance of tackling the high harm networks supplying drugs and trafficking them across the border. We are taking action target the illicit finance that underpins their activities through cash seizures, asset forfeitures, money laundering prosecutions and civil or criminal recovery prosecutions.

Drugs: Misuse

Jim Shannon: [185074]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his Department has appointed a (a) national recovery champion and (b) steering committee to oversee the implementation of the Government's Drug Strategy, published in July 2017.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to preventing drug use in our communities and supporting people through treatment and recovery and we expect to make an announcement about the Recovery Champion in due course.

We have established a Drug Strategy Board which includes representation from Government departments and wider partners who are critical to the successful delivery of the Strategy, including those in education, health, criminal justice, housing and employment. The Board is chaired by the Home Secretary and its purpose is to

oversee and drive implementation of the commitments in the 2017 Drug Strategy. The Board has met twice since the Drug Strategy was published, the next meeting will take place in early November.

Emergency Calls: Hoaxes and False Alarms

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[186229]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many 999 hoax phone calls have been made in each of the last ten years for which figures are available.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Home Office does not collect this data. Law enforcement, including the handling of 999 calls is an operational matter for the police. It is for elected Police Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to decide how best to manage their communications and response to the public, and gather the data they need to inform those decisions.

Europol

Louise Haigh: [186389]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the UK can participate in Europol operational projects after the UK leaves the EU without an adequacy agreement for data sharing.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Government has been clear that we want an ambitious future partnership with the EU that covers: mechanisms for rapid and secure data exchange, practical measures to support cross-border operational cooperation, and continued UK cooperation with EU law enforcement and criminal justice agencies.

As outlined in our White Paper of July 2018, , the UK is one of the biggest contributors of data, information and expertise to Europol. The White Paper also sets out our continued commitment to global data protection standards and proposes that the future relationship with the EU in this area should be based on adequacy.

However, in the event there is no agreement on data sharing at the point of exit there is existing precedent for third country participation in European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) priorities, which are projects to combat jointly prioritised crime threats. Whilst the involvement of non-EU partners should comply with the rules on exchanges of data as set out in the Europol Regulation, there is no requirement for these countries to have an adequacy finding from the European Commission.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service: Staff

[184932] **Andrew Gwynne:**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2018 to Question 180118 on Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service:

Staff, what impact assessments his Department has conducted on Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service since 2015.

Andrew Gwynne: [184934]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2018 to Question 180118 on Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service: Staff, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels at the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

Andrew Gwynne: [184935]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2018 to Question 180119 on Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service: Staff, what meetings Ministers of his Department have had with representatives of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service to discuss support and well being provision for fire service personnel.

Andrew Gwynne: [184938]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 24 October 2018 to Question 180120 on Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service: Standards, what meetings Ministers of his Department have had with the Mayor of Greater Manchester since May 2017 to discuss the provision of fire services.

Andrew Gwynne: [184939]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations his Department has received from the office of the Mayor of Greater Manchester on fire service provision.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Central Government regularly engages with both fire and rescue services and authorities in relation to the delivery of fire provision in England.

I recently commissioned a piece of work to look at the demand and risks facing fire and rescue services in England. As part of this, I wrote to all services inviting them to provide evidence of changing demands and risk in their service. I also had a discussion with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in June 2018, to better understand the pressures they faced.

Central Government has not undertaken a formal assessment of workforce numbers. It is the responsibility of the Mayor of Greater Manchester to ensure that his local fire and rescue service have the appropriate resource in place to deliver their core functions and that their staff are appropriately supported to undertake their vital role.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are currently undertaking an inspection programme which is looking at how effective and efficient each fire and rescue service in England is at keeping their communities safe from fire and other risks across their core functions of prevention, protection and response. This includes a focus on how services allocate and support their workforce to fulfil its core functions. HMICFRS will start discovery phase in

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in November and the results of the inspection are due to be made available by Summer 2019. We will give full consideration to these findings when made available.

Andrew Gwynne: [184933]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2018 to Question 180118 on Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service: Staff, whether his Department has had discussions with representatives of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service on staffing levels since 2015.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Central Government regularly engages with both fire and rescue services and authorities in relation to the delivery of fire provision in England.

I recently commissioned a piece of work to look at the demand and risks facing fire and rescue services in England. As part of this, I wrote to all services inviting them to provide evidence of changing demands and risk in their service. I also had a discussion with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in June 2018, to better understand the pressures they faced.

Central Government has not undertaken a formal assessment of workforce numbers. It is the responsibility of the Mayor of Greater Manchester to ensure that his local fire and rescue service have the appropriate resource in place to deliver their core functions and that their staff are appropriately supported to undertake their vital role.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are currently undertaking an inspection programme which is looking at how effective and efficient each fire and rescue service in England is at keeping their communities safe from fire and other risks across their core functions of prevention, protection and response. This includes a focus on how services allocate and support their workforce to fulfil its core functions. HMICFRS will start discovery phase in Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in November and the results of the inspection are due to be made available by Summer 2019. We will give full consideration to these findings when made available.

■ Immigrants: EU Nationals

John Woodcock: [187007]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) permanent residence and (b) settled status will be required to apply for citizenship after the UK leaves the EU.

Caroline Nokes:

One of the requirements for naturalisation as a British citizen is that the person is free of immigration time restrictions. This will not change. EU citizens and their family members can currently meet that requirement by having permanent residence under the EEA Regulations. They will be able to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the

UK under the EU Settlement Scheme, which will allow them to show that they meet this requirement after the UK leaves the EU.

National Economic Crime Centre: Finance

Louise Haigh: [187081]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional funding he plans to allocate to the National Economic Crime Centre in 2019-20.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We are finalising the budget for the National Economic Crime Centre in 2019-20. The NECC will benefit from the £48 million investment in illicit finance, which will be drawn from several government departments and agencies, recognising the need for a whole-system response and acknowledging the priority afforded to SOC.

Offences Against Children

Louise Haigh: [186384]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2018 to Question 176432 on Offences against Children, whether any funding requests from police forces for investigations into child sexual exploitation have been rejected by the Government in the last three years.

Mr Nick Hurd:

No applications for Special Grant funding in respect of investigations into Child Sexual Exploitation have been declined in the last three years.

Applications declined are published alongside successful applications on the Gov.uk website

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-funding-special-grant-applications

Offences against Children: Internet

Sarah Champion: [184987]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his 3 September 2018 speech Keeping children safe online, to what specific law enforcement agency work he plans to allocate the £21 million of additional funding to tackle child sexual exploitation online.

Sarah Champion: [184988]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will (a) make an assessment of the risk of online child exploitation posed by and (b) collect data on the number of those offences committed on the dark web.

Sarah Champion: [184989]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 18 October 2018 NSPCC news release Livestreaming and video-chat risks highlighted in latest

survey, what recent assessment he has made of the risk of abuse faced by children in the UK through livestreaming sites; and if he will make a statement.

Sarah Champion: [184990]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the steps that social networks have taken to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation since his 3 September 2018 speech Keeping children safe online.

Victoria Atkins:

In September, the Home Secretary announced an extra £21.5m investment in law enforcement over the next 18 months to reduce the volume of offending and pursue the most hardened and dangerous abusers. The majority of this funding will go to UK law enforcement and intelligence agencies to tackle the most determined and dedicated abusers.

Due to the sensitive nature of this work and the policy of successive Governments, the spending of the intelligence agencies' activities cannot be revealed, but some of the law enforcement funding will expand the Joint Operations Team (a jointly managed National Crime Agency (NCA) and GCHQ capability), increase funding for the Regional Organised Crime Units and improve digital forensic capability.

The National Crime Agency's National Strategic Assessment 2018 has assessed the risk that anonymisation tools, including the use of the dark web, pose to children online. It states that fast, 'secure' and anonymous operating environments will enable all levels of criminality. The full document can be found here:

http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/905-national-strategic-assessment-for-soc-2018/file

Online Offenders often move between the open and dark web. For this reason, statistics held on online CSEA are not broken down into where the offences are committed.

The National Crime Agency's National Strategic Assessment for 2018 has assessed that livestreaming is a growing threat. In his speech at the NSPCC on the 3 September, the Home Secretary highlighted awareness of this risk to children due to improving technology and the growing ease of money transfers across borders.

The Home Secretary stated that he expects a more effective partnership between technology companies, law enforcement, the charity sector and Government. Therefore, the Home Office will be making £250,000 available to support new ideas on how to detect and disrupt the live-streaming of abuse.

In November, the Home Secretary will be visiting US based social networks and other technology companies to discuss progress on steps to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation online, including the development of a tool to detect online child grooming.

Organised Crime

Louise Haigh: [187082]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Written Statement of 1 November 2018, HCWS1053, on tackling serious and organised crime, what proportion of the £48 million will come from existing police budgets.

Mr Ben Wallace:

At least £48 million investment in illicit finance is drawn from several government departments, recognising the need for a whole system response and acknowledging the priority afforded to tackling SOC. Police budgets for 2019/20 have not yet been set. We will announce the 2019-20 settlement later in the year in the usual way.

Passports: Biometrics

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[<u>184983</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on UK citizens using ePassport gates after the UK leaves the EU.

Caroline Nokes:

We keep the border and immigration system under regular review however the Government has no plans to change the use of e-passport gates by UK citizens.

Police

Louise Haigh: [185646]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the resource implications for police forces of the force management statements of August 2018.

Louise Haigh: [185647]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions his Department has had with police forces in England and Wales on the force management statements published by those forces.

Louise Haigh: [185649]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 4.3.1 of the National Police Chiefs' Council's Chief Constables' Council Minutes of 12 July 2018, what support his Department is providing to police forces to professionalise demand management.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Home Office works closely with police forces to understand the demands facing them. In 2017, I spoke to every police force in England & Wales about the changing demands on them. The Government responded with a funding settlement that is increasing total investment in the police system by over £460m in 2018/19, including increases in Council Tax precept income.

We are doing substantial work with the police to better understand future police demand, what capabilities the police need to respond, and how efficiency and productivity can help improve services to the public. This programme of work includes analysis by policing of the first round of force management statements. We are also working closely with policing colleagues and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services on the ongoing development of these statements.

■ Police: Counter-terrorism

Louise Haigh: [187079]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to page 76 of Budget 2018, what proportion of the additional £160 million funding for counter-terror policing in 2019-20 is an increase on previously planned year on year spending; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an additional £160m funding for counter-terrorism policing in 2019-20 in the Budget statement on 29th October 2018 (Hansard Vol. 648, Column 657). This takes counter-terrorism police funding for next year to over £800m. The entirety of this additional funding is new money not previously announced or agreed.

The effect of this additional investment will be that counter-terrorism police budgets increase by £59m, from £757m this year to £816m next.

CT police funding since 2015-16 is set out in the table below.

£M	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-
Baseline budge (as SR 2015)	t 564	708	707	686	656
Additional investment (since SR)	-	28	71	160	
Total funding	564	708	735	757	816

Refugees: Families

Dame Caroline Spelman:

[184880]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help refugee families reunite in the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The Government provides a safe and legal route to bring families together through its family reunion policy. Under our refugee family reunion policy, we have granted visas to nearly 26,000 partners and children of those granted protection in the UK in the last five years.

Our policy allows immediate pre-flight family members of those granted protection here to reunite with them. It also includes a provision to grant visas outside the Rules in exceptional circumstances; this enables reunion between family members who otherwise do not qualify under the Rules. However, we are listening carefully to calls to expand the scope of the refugee family reunion rules and continue our productive discussions with non-governmental organisations in this area.

Family reunion is only part of the Government's wider package of support for refugees and we have resettled a total of 5,702 people under our resettlement schemes in the year ending June 2018.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[<u>184999</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Oral contribution of 25 October 2015 on Immigration: DNA Tests, Official Report, column 467. whether he plans to reinstate funding for DNA tests in refugee family reunion applications.

Caroline Nokes:

Those applying for refugee family reunion are not required to provide DNA evidence to prove their family relationship and can rely on other evidence to support their application. However, if they wish to do so, they can voluntarily provide DNA evidence at their own expense and this will be considered alongside all other supporting evidence provided.

Our guidance on considering family reunion applications highlights the challenges that applicants may face in obtaining documents to support their application and makes clear the types of evidence that can be provided. This is available on Gov.UK at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-reunion-instruction.

We have no current plans to change the policy, but we will keep our approach to DNA evidence in refugee family reunion cases under review.

Nicky Morgan: [185007]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2018 to Question 173568 on Refugees: Families and with reference to table as_21_q of the Home Office Asylum tables volume 5, how many of the refugee family reunion visas that were granted in 2017 were subsequently used.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested is not published. The available information relates to refugee family reunion visa granted, published in the quarterly Immigration Statistics at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release

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Nicky Morgan: [185008]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2018 to Question 173569 on Refugees: Families and with reference to the Figure 4 of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report entitled A re-inspection of the family reunion process, focusing on applications received at the Amman Entry Clearance Decision Making Centre November 2017 – April 2018 published in September 2018, how many of the 81 family reunion applications referred for consideration for leave outside the rules in 2017 were subsequently granted.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested is not available. The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report did not publish full data on the number of cases referred for consideration of leave outside the rules which were subsequently granted and this information does not form part of published immigration statistics.

Published Home Office statistics relating to family reunion applications can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2018/list-of-tables#asylum

Regional Organised Crime Units: Finance

Louise Haigh: [187084]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the change in real-terms funding made available to regional organised crime units from their inception to the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr Ben Wallace:

As the Serious Organised Crime Strategy states, the Government has invested over £160m in uplifting the capabilities of ROCUs since 2013. This directly supports the significant and welcome investments made locally by Police and Crime Commissioners.

Since 2014/15, overall national investment in ROCU capabilities has increased year-on-year, reflecting the growing recognition from Chief Constables and PCCs of the vital role ROCUs play in tackling the threat from serious and organised crime in their local communities. According to police figures, in 2014/15, £87.4m was spent nationally on ROCU core capabilities, rising to £129.1m in 2017/18.

In 2017, around £40m of Government funding was announced to uplift a new generation of capabilities in ROCUs over the following three years. This further reflects the Government's continuing commitment to ensuring the police have the capabilities they need to tackle the significant threat from serious and organised crime.

■ Road Traffic Offences: Speed Limits

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[186975]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an estimate of (a) the amount of money raised for the public purse from fees paid by people undertaking speed awareness courses in the last five years and (b) the cost to the public purse of running such courses in that same time period.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The intention of speed awareness courses is not to raise money for general government expenditure. Anyone committing a speeding offence who accepts a speed awareness course in lieu of other police enforcement action is required to pay to attend a course; course fees are set at a level that covers the cost of the courses and related expenses.

■ UK Border Force: Dogs

Patrick Grady: [185004]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what budget his Department has allocated to the creation of online and printed material featuring Border Paws characters.

Patrick Grady: [185005]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, at which border points printed material featuring the Border Paws characters has been made available.

Patrick Grady: [185006]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether an external creative agency was engaged to develop and produce Border Paws online and printed material.

Caroline Nokes:

The Border Paws family travel toolkit includes a range of digital and printable promotional materials for partners to use. The promotional materials form part of the annual peak travel communications campaign for Border Force and were also used to mark the 40th anniversary of detector dogs.

The design of Border Paws was completed by Design 102, an internal design team who are part of the Government Communications Service and not an external design agency.

Border Paws was funded from the Home Office's Communications budget. No printing of Border Paws was provided for external stakeholders.

Border Paws was made available to all national ports including those in devolved administrations and was optional for partners to use.

For example, Heathrow paid for the print of leaflets for display in terminals over the summer and October half term. Airlines including Virgin and American Airlines gave leaflets out to younger travellers and British Airways show the Border Paws animation on flights.

UK Border Force: Finance

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[185037]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of (a) the adequacy of the resourcing allocated to Border Force and (b) the effect of the UK leaving the EU on that resourcing.

Caroline Nokes:

Border Force will always ensure it has the necessary resources to keep the border secure and will respond flexibly to emerging requirements through ongoing assessments of operational needs.

Border Force has recruited a Readiness Task Force to provide operational resilience to the frontline and allow existing staff to undertake EU exit related training. The c.300 multi-disciplinary Border Force officers will be fully deployed by the end of the year.

An additional c.600 Border Force officers are being recruited in 2018/19 to respond to the new requirements it will face as a result of EU Exit and to provide resilience at key locations.

UK Border Force: Staff

Caroline Lucas: [184941]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October to Question 181301 on UK Border Force: Staff, and with reference to the National Audit Office report on The UK Border: preparedness for EU exit published on 24 October, whether his Department has made any new assessment of the adequacy of the numbers of the current and projected Border Force workforce to meet projected future demands.

Caroline Nokes:

Border Force will always ensure it has the necessary resources to keep the border secure and will respond flexibly to emerging requirements through ongoing assessments of operational needs.

Border Force has recruited a Readiness Task Force to provide operational resilience to the frontline and allow existing staff to undertake EU exit related training. The c.300 multi-disciplinary Border Force officers will be fully deployed by the end of the year.

An additional c.600 Border Force officers are being recruited in 2018/19 to respond to the new requirements it will face as a result of EU Exit and to provide resilience at key locations.

UK Visas and Immigration: Sopra Steria

Alison Thewliss: [187058]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the addresses are of the new UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service centres to be delivered under the contract with Sopra Steria; and what libraries will host services under that contract.

Caroline Nokes:

These are all the address for the UK Visa and Citizenship Centres including the libraries that will host this service;

UK Visa and Citizenship Centres not in libraries

- Birmingham Ground Floor, T3, Trinity Park, Bickenhill Lane, Birmingham, B37
 7ES
- Belfast 1st Floor Capital House, 3 Upper Queen Street, Belfast, BT1 6FB
- Glasgow The Beacon, 176 St Vincent St, Glasgow
- Croydon Bedford Point, 35 Dingwall Road, Croydon, Surrey,

UK Visa and Citizenship Centres in libraries

- Cardiff Cardiff Main Library, The Hayes, CF10 1FL
- Aberdeen- Central Library, Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1GW
- Barbican The Barbican Library, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS
- Bedford Bedford Central Library, Harpur Street, Bedford, MK40 1PG
- Bournemouth Bournemouth Library 22 The Triangle, Bournemouth BH2 5RQ
- Bradley Stoke Bradley Stoke Library, Fiddlers Wood Lane, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire, BS32 9BS
- Brighton Jubilee Library Jubilee Street, Brighton, BN1 1GE
- Burnley Burnley Central Library, Grimshaw Street, Burnley, BB11 2BD
- Cambridge Central Library Cambridge, 7 Lion Yard, Grand Arcade, Cambridge, CB2 3QD
- Canning Town Canning Town Library 103 Barking Road E16 4HQ
- Canterbury Canterbury Library, 18 High Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2RA
- Coventry Central Library, Smithford Way, Coventry CV1 1FY
- Dorchester Dorchester Library, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ
- East Ham East Ham Community Neighbourhood Centre & Library, 328 Barking Rd, London E6 2RT
- Eastbourne- Eastbourne Library Grove Road, Eastbourne BN21 4TL
- Gloucester- Gloucester Main Library, Brunswick Rd, Gloucester GL1 1HT
- Grays Grays Library, Orsett Rd, Grays RM17 5DX

- Hemel Hempstead- Hemel Hempstead Civic Centre, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1HH
- Hull Hull Central Library, Albion St, Hull HU1 3TF
- Ipswich Ipswich Library, Northgate Street, Ipswich IP1 3DE
- Kensington, London Kensington Central Library, 12 Phillimore Walk, Kensington, London W8 7RX
- Lancaster Lancaster Library, Market Square Lancaster LA1 1HY
- Liverpool Liverpool Central Library William Brown Street L3 8EW
- Llandudno Llandudno Library, Mostyn Street, Llandudno, LL30 2RP
- Newcastle City Library 33 New Bridge Street West Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8AX
- Newport Newport Central Library, John Frost Square, Newport, NP20 1PA
- Norwich Central Library, The Forum, Millennium Plain, Norwich NR2 1AW
- Nottingham Nottingham Central Library, Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HP
- Bristol Bristol Patchway Library, Rodway Road, Patchway, South Gloucestershire BS34 5PE
- Peterborough Peterborough Central library, Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 1RX
- Portsmouth Carnegie Library, Fratton Rd, Portsmouth, PO1 5EZ
- Preston Preston Harris Library, Market Square, Preston PR1 2PP
- Reading Reading Central, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ
- Swinton (Rotherham) Library & Neighbourhood Hub, Station Street, Swinton, S64 8PZ
- Salisbury Salisbury Library, Market Place, SALISBURY SP1 1BL
- Shepherds Bush Shepherds Bush Library, 6 Wood Lane, London, W12 7BF
- Shoe Lane Shoe Lane Library, Hill House, 1 Little New St, London EC4A 3JR
- Stockport Stockport Central Library, Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3RS
- Stratford, London Stratford Library, 3 The Grove, London E15 1EL
- Stevenage Stevenage (Central) Southgate, Stevenage, Herts SG1 1HD
- Swindon Swindon Central Library Regent Circus, Swindon SN1 1QG
- Taunton Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3XZ
- Truro Union Place, Truro TR1 1EP
- Victoria, London Victoria Library, 160 Buckingham Palace Rd, Belgravia, London SW1W 9UD
- Wakefield, UK Wakefield Library, Wakefield One, Burton St, Wakefield WF1 2EB

- Warrington Warrington Library, Museum Street, Warrington, WA1 1JB
- Warwick Warwick Library & Information Centre, Shire Hall, Market Place, Warwick, CV34 4RL
- Watford Watford Central Hempstead Road, Watford, Herts WD17 3EU
- Wimbledon Wimbledon Library, 35, Wimbledon Hill Road, SW19 7NB
- Wolverhampton Wolverhampton Central Library Snow Hill, Wolverhampton WV1 3AX
- Burnholme Tang Hall Explore Library (Burnholme), Mossdale Avenue, York, YO31 0HA

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Business Premises: Tenancy Agreements

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[186925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the average cost of deposits required of businesses entering commercial tenancies; what assessment he has made of the effect of such costs on the viability of businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Department does not hold the information requested, as the terms on whether, and how much, deposit will be paid by the tenants of a commercial property is agreed by the landlord and tenant on an individual basis and this information is not reported centrally.

■ Council Tax: Dorset

Sir Christopher Chope:

[186923]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it the Government's policy that the current average council tax across Christchurch, Poole and Bournemouth be used as the base for setting the 2019-20 council tax across the new unitary authority.

Sir Christopher Chope:

186924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy that the current average council tax across Christchurch, Poole and Bournemouth be used as the base for setting the 2019-20 council tax across the new unitary authority.

Rishi Sunak:

As I explained in my answer of 22 October to my Hon Friend's Question UIN 180627 and in my answer of 31 October to my Hon Friend's Question UIN 184365, it is now open to the shadow Dorset Council and the shadow Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to comment on the approach to council tax harmonisation which we

are minded to adopt. Having regard to any comments we receive, we will decide the approach to council tax harmonisation to be adopted, and make any legislation necessary for its implementation.

Homelessness

Emma Reynolds: [187019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many times the rough sleeping and homelessness reduction taskforce has met in 2018; what the current membership is of the taskforce; and how many changes to have membership have taken place since the announcement of the taskforce; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Taskforce met for the first time on 7 March 2018 and has met regularly since. Membership of Government Taskforce's can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-cabinet-committees-system-and-list-of-cabinet-committees. There have been no formal changes of membership, although attendance varies in response to Ministerial availability and appointments.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

John Healey: [<u>185513</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what projects have been funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund to date.

James Brokenshire:

In February 2018, we announced the successful Housing Infrastructure Fund projects to be funded through Marginal Viability Funding. In March 2018, we announced that we were working with 45 places through Forward Funding.

The first of the successful Forward Funding projects, to provide £291 million in funding to unlock up to 18,000 homes in East London through improvements to the Docklands Light Railway, was announced at Autumn Budget.

At Autumn Budget we also announced that the Housing Infrastructure Fund will increase by £500 million to a total of £5.5 billion, unlocking up to 650,000 new homes.

Housing: Construction

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[186945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many homes (a) have been built and are occupied now and (b) are guaranteed to be built and occupied by the end of 2019 as a result of the Government's garden villages and towns policy.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government currently supports 24 locally-led garden cities, towns and villages through its Garden Communities programme and sponsorship of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation. Locally-led Garden Communities are vital to delivering transformational housing growth that we need. We have provided £22 million of capacity funding to fund dedicated staff teams, key studies and assessments to underpin delivery of our garden towns and villages.

As of June, local authorities confirm that over 10,000 high quality homes have been completed, leaving a legacy for generations to be proud of – echoing the commitments made in our Housing White Paper.

Local authorities expect over 5,500 additional homes will be completed by the end of 2019.

We do not hold data on the occupancy rates of Garden Communities, but the number of long-term vacant dwellings across England remains lower than when records began.

Housing: Thames Estuary

Sir David Evennett: [185534]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the need for investment in housing in the Thames Estuary.

Jake Berry:

The Government is committed to driving up housing supply where homes are most needed and in March 2016 established the independent Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission to develop an ambitious vision and delivery plan for north Kent, south Essex and east London up to 2050.

The Commission has now produced its report. Government will respond in full to the Commission's report by the end of the calendar year.

Leasehold: Ground Rent

John Healey: [186950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the average annual ground rent paid on a leasehold property in the most recent period for which figures are available.

James Brokenshire:

The Department does not collect data on ground rents as a matter of course.

However, the Government is concerned that ground rents have risen from historically small sums to hundreds of pounds per year in many cases, and that consumers see no clear benefit from them.

This is why we will be introducing legislation so that in the future ground rents on newly established leases of houses and flats are set at a peppercorn.

We have set out our plans in a technical consultation on how to implement the Government's reforms to the leasehold system in England. This is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementing-reforms-to-the-leasehold-system.

Local Government: Borrowing

John Healey: [186949]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much and what proportion of (a) total council borrowing and (b) council borrowing for housing was sourced through the public works loan board in each year since 2009-10.

James Brokenshire:

Under the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities are able to borrow freely without Government approval. Local authorities must comply with the prudential framework when making decisions on borrowing. The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is one potential source of borrowing available to local authorities. The Government collects data on the total borrowing activity of local authorities each year. However, this does not split out the sources of borrowing. This data can be accessed using the following hyperlink: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-capital-expenditure-receipts-and-financing.

Data is collected on the amount of local authority borrowing that is outstanding each year and this is split out by category, including PWLB. The data shows the borrowing activity from 2013 up to the current financial year. It is collected on a quarterly basis. It is available through the following hyperlink:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-local-government-finance#borrowing-and-investment.

Local authorities do not borrow specifically for individual projects but do so on an aggregate basis. Therefore, it is not possible to identify borrowing from PWLB that has been used for expenditure on housing.

Local Government: Pensions

Alex Cunningham: [181285]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the recent Court of Appeal judgement in the case of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Jacqueline Lewis against the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether the new Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision Directive will be applied to the local government pension scheme in January 2019.

Rishi Sunak:

[Holding answer 23 October 2018]: Following the Government's success at the Court of Appeal, pending the conclusion of any further legal proceedings, I intend to reinstate the guidance provided to Local Government Pension Scheme administering

authorities requiring that they should not pursue investment policies that are contrary to UK foreign policy or UK defence policy.

Separately, the Directive on the Activities and Supervision of Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP II) is due to be implemented by 13 January 2019. We do not feel it is necessary to change the rules of the Local Government Pension Scheme to give effect to it as we consider that its investment rules and governance requirements already comply with the Directive's objectives.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Crime Prevention Louise Haigh: [187086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what specific projects his Department is leading on to (a) support complex families with children at risk of involvement in crime and (b) build safer communities with a greater resilience to serious and organised crime.

Rishi Sunak:

My Department leads on the national Troubled Families Programme, which aims to find better ways of working with complex families with multiple high-cost problems. £920 million has been committed to the programme from 2015 - 2020. It targets families at risk of poor outcomes for early support. This can include families already involved in crime or anti-social behaviour; those where children are not attending school regularly; or where children are in need of help. I also recently announced a new £5 million Supporting Families Against Youth Crime Fund to help eligible local authorities in England who are part of the Troubled Families Programme increase their focus on tackling youth crime and gangs.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Pay

David Linden: [185756]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £8.75 per hour.

Jake Berry:

None of the Department's directly-employed staff are currently paid less than £8.75 per hour.

Sleeping Rough

John Healey: [<u>185505</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release New government initiative to reduce rough sleeping, published on 30 March 2018, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Rough Sleeping Team announced in that press release.

James Brokenshire:

The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) is made up of a team of rough sleeping and homelessness experts, drawn from government departments, local authorities and agencies with specialist knowledge. These advisers have been working closely with local authorities with the highest numbers of rough sleepers, who are using our £30 million targeted fund to tackle rough sleeping in their area. The RSI has already made significant progress. According to data submitted by the local authorities, almost 3,500 individuals have so far been relieved or prevented from rough sleeping as a result of the RSI funding.

John Healey: [185506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release entitled New government initiative to reduce rough sleeping, published on 30 March 2018, what progress the Government has made on its work with the National Housing Federation to look at providing additional, coordinated move-on accommodation for rough sleepers across the country.

James Brokenshire:

During the process of formulating the Rough Sleeping Strategy, we engaged with the National Housing Federation and many other specialist organisations regarding move-on accommodation. Following this engagement and the release of the Strategy, we are implementing the Rapid Rehousing Pathway, of which the Supported Lettings Fund is a key element. This fund will help increase access to move-on accommodation by supporting those who require tenancy sustainment support, as well as build trust amongst landlords.

John Healey: [<u>185507</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have to date submitted a rough sleeping count for 2018 using the DELTA online system.

James Brokenshire:

The rough sleeping counts or estimates take place between 1 October and 30 November.

Local authorities have to submit their data using the MHCLG DELTA online system by 14 December.

4 local authorities to date have submitted their data using this system. Once figures are submitted they are then certified by Homeless Link, which is funded by MHCLG to provide independent verification, validation and guidance to local authorities for the annual rough sleeping count and estimate process.

We cannot provide any more detailed information about who has submitted their rough sleeping count or estimates during the process, as this could undermine the trust, quality and value of the official statistics.

As in previous years, the official rough sleeping statistics will be published in January 2019.

Special Economic Areas: Tees Valley

Anna Turley: [187061]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 4.88 of Budget 2018 Red Book, what powers the Government plans to confer on the South Tees special economic area.

Anna Turley: [187062]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 4.88 of Budget 2018 Redbook, whether business rates that will be transferred to the proposed South Tees special economic area will include business rates currently retained by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

Anna Turley: [187063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment has he made of the effect of the business rates retention by the proposed South Tees special economic area on the financial sustainability of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

Rishi Sunak:

The South Tees site will be designated as a Special Economic Area which will enable the local retention of additional business rates growth. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council will continue to collect 50 per cent of all business rates in respect of those properties currently situated within the proposed boundary of the Special Economic Area, in line with the current operation of the Business Rates retention System.

In addition, once the Special Economic Area is established in statute, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council will retain 100 per cent of all business rates growth obtained within that same area. This additional funding can then be used by the South Tees Development Corporation and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to reinvest in local economic growth.

Supported Housing

John Healey: [185511]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress he has made on the work with providers, local authorities, membership bodies and resident representatives to develop a robust oversight regime for supported accommodation, announced on 9 August 2018.

James Brokenshire:

Government believes keeping the funding for all supported housing in Housing Benefit, alongside an oversight scheme, will give confidence to the sector and will help us meet our aims of promoting supply, and achieving value for money and positive outcomes for supported housing residents.

Since the announcement in August to maintain Housing Benefit to fund all supported housing, Government has been working closely with the sector including other representative bodies and local authorities to develop options for oversight of supported housing.

We have already met a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities and providers of supported housing and subsequent engagement is planned in the month of November.

■ Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission

Sir David Evennett: [185535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Government plans to respond to the report of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission; what plans he has to implement the recommendations of that Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Jake Berry:

The Government will respond in full to the report of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission by the end of the calendar year.

At Budget 2018 we announced that, drawing on the Thames Estuary Commission report, the government will be supporting a study to develop options and consult the local area on a Great Thames Park.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cameroon: Crimes against Humanity

Emma Reynolds: [186312]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of recent reports by the International Rescue Committee of atrocities in South Cameroon and the displacement of 250,000 people in that region.

Harriett Baldwin:

The UN have recorded that over 460,000 people have been displaced by recent violence in Cameroon's Anglophone North-West and South-West regions and we are closely monitoring the situation. We have a humanitarian adviser based in Cameroon working with partners on humanitarian issues in the country and we are also funding a protection adviser in the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs working in the region on the Anglophone Crisis.

Cameroon: Refugees

Julian Knight: [185624]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to refugees in Cameroon.

Harriett Baldwin:

There are currently over 368,000 refugees in Cameroon from conflicts in North East Nigeria and the Central African Republic. We are providing £6.55 million in humanitarian support to Cameroon this year, including for protection, nutrition, health, food security and livelihoods to support these refugees and those internally displaced in the north of Cameroon.

■ China: Refugees

Paul Scully: [<u>185625</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what representations he has made to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on its decision to terminate the refugee status of Chin refugees from Burma in (a) Malaysia and (b) India.

Alistair Burt:

Since August 2018 UK officials have consulted the Burma office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, and the UNHCR office in Geneva for clarification on the needs assessment process for Chin refugees residing in other countries, and UNHCR's proposed process for ensuring their safe return to Burma.

The UK will continue to monitor this process in line with our objectives of ensuring the safety of all those displaced by violence in Burma and a safe return process for all groups forced to flee to other countries.

Department for International Development: Brexit

Jon Trickett: [186202]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department has spent on consultancy fees relating to the UK leaving the EU since July 2016.

Harriett Baldwin:

The Department for International Development has not spent any money on consultancy fees relating to the UK leaving the EU since July 2016.

Developing Countries: Homosexuality

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[186944]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many countries that receive UK official development assistance treat homosexuality as a criminal act.

Alistair Burt:

Of the 126 countries that receive UK Official Development Assistance 51 treat homosexuality as a criminal act.

Gaza: Hospitals

Bill Grant: [185730]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to hospitals in Gaza.

Alistair Burt:

To help address the humanitarian situation in Gaza and alleviate the burdened health system, the UK has provided £1.5 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) Appeal. This will help treat patients in 11 hospitals under pressure in Gaza, by restocking vital medical supplies including surgical equipment, bandages and medical supplies, and to help provide physical rehabilitation services for around 4,000 people, following the recent surge in violence. To help disabled people regain mobility the ICRC will also continue to support the Artificial Limb Centre in Gaza. In addition, the UK has increased its assistance to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees by an extra £17m this year to help support the provision of basic healthcare in 22 health centres in Gaza.

Our support in the longer term looks to address the underlying causes of humanitarian strife and raise living standards by focussing on increasing trade and job creation, enabling greater movement and access for people and goods, and enhancing the supply of electricity and clean water. We continue to regularly press the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority about the need to expedite medical permits and the unimpeded passage of medical personnel.

India: Asbestos

Preet Kaur Gill: [185727]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the asbestos industry in India on incidences of mesothelioma in people (a) living near and (b) working in the industry.

Alistair Burt:

The Department for International Development has not undertaken any assessment and does not currently have programmes focused specifically on the safe disposal of asbestos waste in India. The UK ended financial aid to India in 2015. DFID's support now focuses on investment, sharing expertise and helping India make the most of its own resources to drive growth and create jobs. As part of this, the new UK-India development partnership is supporting urban development in India and DFID is providing support to build more sustainable, cleaner and safer cities.

Pakistan: Training

Ms Marie Rimmer: [187066]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of people enrolled on training courses provided by the Punjab skills development fund are (a) from minority communities and (b) on nursing courses.

Alistair Burt:

41,818 trainees are currently enrolled on Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) training courses. The number of trainees who have disclosed their status as non-Muslim is 647 (1.55%). PSDF does not provide nursing courses.

Palestinians: Politics and Government

Joan Ryan: [R] [186156]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the description on 30 June 2018 by Mahmoud Al-Habbash, an advisor to the PA President, of Israelis and Jews as the culture of Satan.

Joan Ryan: [R] [186157]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the assertion on 5 October 2018 on official PA TV, that Jews dance and live on the body parts of others, and on the blood of others.

Alistair Burt:

The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. Our sustained support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the PA to commit to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle. President Abbas restated his commitment to the two-state solution on September 27 at the UN General Assembly, and through our financial assistance, the UK will continue to support a stable PA which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Yasmin Qureshi: [186297]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent steps her Department has taken to ensure that (a) food, (b) fuel and (c) medical supplies reach hard to access parts of Yemen.

Alistair Burt:

The UK has played a leading role in helping secure vital access for food, fuel, and medicine into and throughout Yemen. Last year when Red Sea port access was restricted after a Houthi ballistic missile attack on Riyadh's civilian airport, UK diplomacy including a visit from the Secretary of State for Development to Riyadh led to the ports being fully reopened. As a part of this effort, the UK provides £1.3 million to the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism to give the Coalition confidence that weapons are not coming in to Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen on commercial ships. Red Sea ports remain fully operational and continue to import most of the food and fuel on which Yemenis rely.

As we have consistently made clear, the Houthis must facilitate access throughout areas they control which is where most of the population live. As penholder on

Yemen in the UN Security Council, the UK continues to call on all parties to comply with the UNSC Presidential Statements of June 2017 and March 2018, which insist that all parties facilitate safe, rapid, and unhindered access for both the humanitarian response and commercial supplies.

On 3 April, the UK announced an additional £170 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen for this financial year (2018/2019). This funding will meet immediate food needs for 2.5 million Yemenis - as well as providing fuel and medical supplies across the country - and brings the total UK bilateral support to Yemen to over £570 million since 2015.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Keith Vaz: [184868]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total value was of UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia in financial year 2017-2018.

Graham Stuart:

The Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) of licences granted and refused for military exports on GOV.UK, which can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data

The total value of military rated items, licensed between 1 April 2017 and 31 st March 2018, was £894,505,658.

The value of exports licensed in a given period is not necessarily a measure of actual exports shipped in that period. This is because most licences are valid for multiple shipments over two years and export values are only available for a subsection of licences (Standard Individual Export Licences). Some licences expire before they are fully used and in these circumstances exporters must apply for a new (duplicate) licence, which can result in a significant element of double counting in some periods.

Foreign Investment in UK: East Midlands

Ben Bradley: [185807]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of foreign direct investment into the East Midlands.

Graham Stuart:

In 2016 the Department for International Trade (DIT) established a dedicated taskforce to deliver bespoke activity to attract foreign direct investment into the Midlands Engine, including the East Midlands. This activity includes: full profiling of the key sectors and showcasing these at events overseas; working with DIT's overseas network and local partners across the region to deliver tailored support to promote individual areas as a destination for investment; international promotion of a portfolio of Midlands capital investment opportunities, including 10 projects from the

East Midlands; and provision of funding for local partners to collaborate and amplify investment messaging, such as attendance at the MIPIM property show in Cannes.

There were 72 investment projects that landed in the East Midlands in tax year 2017-2018. There were 3714 associated new jobs. This is the highest number of new jobs from foreign direct investment in the East Midlands for 3 years.

Trade Agreements

Stephen Hammond:

[185558]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many free trade agreements with third parties the UK is party to as a result of its membership of the EU; and how many of those agreements the UK Government plans to replicate after the UK leaves the EU.

George Hollingbery:

As an EU member state, the UK currently participates in around 40 free trade agreements. A list of these agreements can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/negotiations-and-agreements/.

The Government is seeking continuity for the effects of these agreements as we leave the EU.

JUSTICE

Convictions: North West

Ms Angela Eagle:

[<u>186960</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, (a) how many and (b) what proportion of trials in the North West resulted in a conviction in each year between 2010 and 2017.

Lucy Frazer:

Figures on convictions are published by defendants prosecuted, rather than trials that result in a conviction. The number of defendants prosecuted, convicted and the conviction ratio in the North West between 2010 and 2017 can be calculated from the Court Outcomes by Police Force Area data tool in the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733996/court-outcomes-by-pfa-2017-update.xlsx

- To identify the published data that is North West specific, select 'Cheshire', 'Cumbria', 'Greater Manchester', 'Lancashire' and 'Merseyside' from 'Police Force Area'.
- For the number of prosecutions, filter 'Court Type' by '02: Magistrates Court'.
- For the number of convictions remove filtering from 'Court Type', and select '01: Convicted' from 'Convicted/Not Convicted'.

ANSWERS

 To calculate the conviction ratio, divide the number of convictions by the number of prosecutions.

Figures for 2018 are planned for publication in May 2019.

Jersey

Tom Brake: [184841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the UK Government is including Jersey into its no-deal contingency planning.

Lucy Frazer:

Yes. Technical discussions to support the Crown Dependencies' own contingency planning are taking place on a regular basis. Jersey's Minister for External Relations, and the Chief Ministers of Guernsey and the Isle of Man, last month met with the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for Contingency Planning at the Department for Exiting the European Union to discuss this work.

Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012

Ms Karen Buck: [184852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which Government departments his Department has consulted as part of the post-implementation review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

Lucy Frazer:

The Lord Chancellor has confirmed that we shall conduct an evidence-based review of Part 1 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, assessing the changes to legal aid provision against their original objectives.

As part of the review process, we have been engaging with a number of Government departments to fully ascertain the impact of LASPO. This includes the Home Office, the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is currently ongoing and will continue following the publication of the review, as we look towards the future of legal support.

Ms Karen Buck: [184853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish the postimplementation review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government remains committed to publishing the findings of the postimplementation review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 by the end of this year.

The evidence gathering phase of the review concluded at the end of September and we are currently considering the evidence submitted. During the evidence gathering

phase we have engaged over 80 individuals and organisations. This process of consideration and engagement with interested parties also represents an opportunity for the Government to consider what the future of legal support should look like.

Ms Karen Buck: [184854]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect on access to justice of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

Lucy Frazer:

The Government is currently undertaking a post-implementation review of the impact of the legal aid changes made under Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) and remains committed to publishing the findings by the end of this year.

The post-implementation review will assess the extent to which LASPO targeted legal aid to those who need it most – which was one of the objectives set out at the time of the reforms.

It is right that we take time to review the evidence gathered from our engagement with experts and interested parties from across the field, to establish the impact of the changes.

We are using this opportunity to inform our wider consideration on the future of legal support in the justice system.

Ministry of Justice: Pay

David Linden: [185775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £10.20 per hour.

Edward Argar:

All MoJ employees are paid at least the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage.

7866 staff employed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ HQ, HMCTS, LAA, OPD and CICA) and 6,398 by HMPPS are paid at a rate below £10.25 per hour.

Ministry of Justice: Social Media

Tulip Siddiq: [185024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has spent from the public purse on promoted content on (a) Twitter, (b) Facebook and (c) Instagram in each month since June 2017.

Edward Argar:

Digital advertising is a cost-effective way for the government to recruit prison officers, help people find out about the courts process and all the other important information the public needs to be aware of.

The Ministry of Justice has spent £171,635.80 on promoted activity with these platforms over the period of 1 June 2017 to 30 September 2018. There may be some spend in certain months which will carry over into the following month. This spend was with Facebook and was to support a number of recruitment campaigns across HMPPS. There was no spend with Twitter or Instagram over this period.

It should be noted that we passed our target to recruit an additional 2,500 prison officers by the end of 2018, seven months early, and have now recruited over 3,500 new staff since that commitment was made in October 2016.

Detail of the monthly spend is shown in the table below.

Month	TOTAL SPEND
Jun-17	£19,219.20
Jul-17	£0.00
Aug-17	£0.00
Sep-17	£0.00
Oct-17	£4,600.00
Nov-17	£360.00
Dec-17	£2,254.32
Jan-18	£3,694.32
Feb-18	£4,654.32
Mar-18	£14,854.32
Apr-18	£71,799.36
May-18	£35,824.32
Jun-18	£6,094.32
Jul-18	£13,834.32
Aug-18	£5,854.32
Sep-18	£7,811.88
Total	£171,635.80

Offenders

Philip Davies: [184955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2018 to Question 181579 on Offenders, if he will publish offences that are categorised as petty offences.

Rory Stewart:

There is no specific definition of a petty offence. As set out in the Answer of 29 October 2018, the Secretary of State was using the phrase petty offender in accordance with its ordinary meaning, namely an offender who commits offences which are not considered serious when compared with some other offences. The seriousness of an offence is determined by two main parameters; the culpability of the offender and the harm caused or risked being caused by the offence.

Offenders: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [182799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were in the criminal justice system in Wales in each year from 2013 to 2017.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 31 October 2018]: The population for each prison in Wales for the years outlined above can be found in table A1.13 which is publicly available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750714/population-2018.ods

The number of people supervised by the probation service broken down by region (at 30 June each year) – is publicly available in table 4.10 in the following links:

2013:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253959/Probation-tables-q2-2013.xls

2014:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368427/probation-tables-q2-2014.xls

2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/471439/probation-apr-jun-2015.xls

2016:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/562961/Probation_Q2_2016.xlsx

2017:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654647/probation-q2-2017.xlsx

Following the change in the organisation of probation in 2015 cases were split between the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies and the aggregated figure should be used.

Prisoners' Release: Funerals

Richard Burgon: [185003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions in each of the last five years children held in custody have been refused permission for escorted leave to attend the funeral of a family member.

Edward Argar:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Prosecutions: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [182802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of successfully prosecuted cases for (i) violence against a person or persons, (ii) sexual offences, (iii) robbery, (iv) theft offences, (v) criminal damage and arson, (vi) drug offences, (vii) possession of a weapon or weapons, (viii) public order offences, (ix) miscellaneous crimes against society, (x) fraud offences, (xi) summary offences involving motoring, (xii) summary offences not involving motoring and (xiii) indictable offences in Wales in each year from 2013 to 2017.

Rory Stewart:

[Holding answer 31 October 2018]: Information requested can be found at the following published data tools from the Criminal Justice Statistics: December 2017 report (published May 2018):

Court Outcomes by Police Force Area

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733996/court-outcomes-by-pfa-2017-update.xlsx

Out of Court Disposals

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733984/out-of-court-disposals-tool-2017-update.xlsx

Remands: Magistrates' Court

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733986/remands-magistrates-tool-2017-update.xlsx

Remands: Crown Court

 $\underline{\text{https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm}} \\ \underline{\text{ent_data/file/733988/remands-crown-court-tool-2017-update.xlsx}} \\ \\$

To limit the data to Wales in all of the above tools, select Welsh Police forces from the 'Police Force Area' filter.

For prosecutions, convictions and conviction ratios by court, age, offence group, offence type and ethnicity use the Court Outcomes by Police Force Area data tool.

- Prosecutions: select 'Magistrates' court' from the 'Court Type' filter. All cases are first heard at Magistrates Court and more serious cases are sent for trial or sentencing at Crown Court.
- Convictions: use the 'Convicted/Not Convicted' field to filter the data
- Conviction ratio: calculated as the number of defendants convicted (at all courts) divided by the number of defendants proceeded against (at magistrates' court) within a given year.

Cautioning rates can be calculated using the Cautions pivot table in the Out of Courts Disposals data tool, which has a field to filter for 'Offence group'.

Remand rates by age, sex, ethnicity and custodial sentence can be calculated using the Remands: Magistrates' Court and Remands: Crown Court data tools.

Trials: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [185089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what number of pleas entered by defendants appearing at the Crown Court in Wales in each year from 2013 to 2017 are not known.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of not known pleas entered by defendants at Crown Court in Wales from 2013 to 2017 can be found in the tables attached.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 185089 tables.xlsx]

PRIME MINISTER

Domestic Visits: Northern Ireland

Lady Hermon: [186234]

To ask the Prime Minister, what plans she has to visit Northern Ireland before Christmas 2018; and if she will make a statement.

Mrs Theresa May:

I visit all parts of the United Kingdom regularly. Details of my visits within the United Kingdom are published on the gov.uk website.

Regional Planning and Development

Layla Moran: [185804]

To ask the Prime Minister, with reference to announcment, Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes–Oxford Arc, published on 29 October 2018, when she plans to appoint a Ministerial Champion for the Arc.

Mrs Theresa May:

An announcement will be made in due course

SCOTLAND

Businesses: Glasgow

Alison Thewliss: [186360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what representations he has made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on (a) financial and (b) other support for fire-hit businesses in the Sauchiehall Street area of Glasgow.

David Mundell:

I regularly discuss matters with the Chancellor and my other Cabinet colleagues which cover a wide range of topics which effect Scotland.

City Region Deals: Glasgow

Mr Paul Sweeney: [187133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the Glasgow city region deal to date.

David Mundell:

The Glasgow City Region Deal is a 20 year programme of investment supported by both the UK and Scottish Governments.

To date, the UK Government has paid £45m to the Glasgow City Region Deal partners, a sum that has been matched by the Scottish Government. Accordingly, the total cost to the public purse so far is £90m.

Scotland Office: Pay

David Linden: [185753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £8.75 per hour.

David Linden: [185773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff in his Department are paid less than £10.20 per hour.

David Linden: [185793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many apprentices are employed in his Department.

David Mundell:

The Office of the Secretary of Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join do so on assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies, principally the Ministry of Justice and the Scottish Government, who remain the employers.

TRANSPORT

Bus Services: North West

Ms Angela Eagle: [186958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 October 2018 to Question 183872 on Bus Services: North West, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for the decline in bus journeys in (a) the North West and (b) Merseyside.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The department has not made an assessment of the reasons for the fall in bus journeys in the North West and Merseyside.

It is important to consider the fall in bus journeys in the context of a broader decline in overall trips. Data from the 2017 National Travel Survey shows that trips have fallen 9% since 2002 in England.

There are a number of factors that may explain the fall in bus patronage on local bus services specifically.

These include:

- Congestion
- Levels of car ownership
- Increase in online shopping
- Reductions in local authority supported services

Bus Services: North West and Surrey

Ms Angela Eagle: [186959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding his Department allocated to bus services serving (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wallasey constituency and (d) Surrey in each of the last eight years.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

£250m of Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) payments are made to bus companies and local authorities. BSOG spend figures have been published on

Gov.uk annually since the 2010-11 financial year. Details can be found via this link: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bus-services-grants-and-funding#bsog-spend

Up until 31 December 2013 Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) was paid directly to bus operators and was not split between commercially run or subsidised bus services. From 1 January 2014 local authorities have received funding equivalent to the level of BSOG which would otherwise have been paid to operators for running subsidised services in 2014. BSOG spend figures are only broken down to upper tier local authority level. It should also be noted that the local authorities listed in the tables are derived from the address given on the BSOG claim form. It does not follow that the services to which the claim relates were necessarily all or partly conducted in that area.

Buses: Exhaust Emissions

Daniel Zeichner: [185044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's news story entitled Government funding boost for bus industry in drive to improve air quality, published in February 2018, how many buses have been retrofitted using funding from the Clean Bus Technology Fund.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Clean Bus Technology Fund awarded £40 million of funding to 20 local authorities to retrofit 2768 buses to a minimum Euro VI standard. To date, 258 buses have been retrofitted using this funding.

Civil Aviation Authority: Staff

Catherine West: [185149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff (a) are employed directly by, (b) are seconded to and (c) work under contract in the Civil Aviation Authority.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The table below outlines the response from Civil Aviation Authority (CAA):

NUMBER OF STAFF DIRECTLY EMPLOYED BY THE

CAA AS AT **28** TH **SEPTEMBER 2018** 1270

Number of staff seconded to the CAA as at $\,8\,$ 19 $^{\rm th}\,$ October 2018

Number of staff working under contract in 65 the CAA as at 30 th October 2018

Please note that this data has been provided for varying dates. This is due to the data being held on a number of systems and the date on which the data was extracted.

Department for Transport: Brexit

Karl Turner: [185571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on each of the work streams related to the UK leaving the EU for which his Department has (a) responsibility and (b) joint-responsibility with other Government Departments.

Chris Grayling:

DfT is directly responsible for 17 work streams relating to the UK's exit from the EU and works with other Government Departments as required to ensure their success. In the most recent reporting submission to DExEU, all 17 of the negotiated and 15 of the contingency work streams are on track to be delivered on time.

Driving: Licensing

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[187047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average time taken has been to return a driving license revoked on the basis of a notifiable medical condition after evidence that the person is fit to drive has been received by the DVLA in each year since 2015.

Jesse Norman:

The specific information requested is not available. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) deals with around 750,000 medical cases each year and aims to complete 90% within 90 working days. The length of time taken to deal with an application following a driving licence being revoked depends on the medical condition involved and whether further information is needed from medical professionals. The table below shows the average working days it took DVLA to make a licensing decision on all medical applications over the last four years.

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE WORKING DAYS	
14/15	58	
15/16	53	
16/17	37	
17/18	32	

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[187048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the time taken to return a driving license revoked on the basis of a notifiable medical condition, after evidence that the individual is fit to drive has been received by the DVLA.

Jesse Norman:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) deals with more than 750,000 medical cases every year. There is a dedicated team in place which is responsible for the continuous improvement of all medical driver licensing services and communications. Letters to customers and medical professionals have been improved, helping to ensure that the DVLA receives the information it needs as quickly as possible.

The DVLA has recruited additional staff to process medical applications and notifications, to make licensing decisions quicker. This includes increasing the number of doctors and introducing nurse caseworkers to deal with more complex cases.

The DVLA is also working with third parties, for example, GPs, consultants and opticians, to reduce turnaround times on the additional information it requires to make licensing decisions.

Ferries

Karl Turner: [185574]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department last analysed capacity in the international roll-on roll-off commercial ferry market; and if he will publish the results of that analysis.

Chris Grayling:

Capacity in the international roll-on roll-off commercial ferry market, particularly in relation to ferries capable of operating North Sea routes at short notice, is relatively limited. This is one of the reasons why we are preparing various contingencies in the unlikely event of a no-deal scenario.

Karl Turner: [185577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department or predecessor Departments last chartered a roll-on roll-off commercial ferry on the international market; and what the cost of that contract to the public purse was in today's prices.

Chris Grayling:

My Department and its predecessor departments have not chartered a commercial ro-ro ferry on the international market in recent times.

■ Ferries: Calais

Karl Turner: [185573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the (a) cost and (b) number of merchant seafarers that would be required to crew ten roll-on roll-off ferries to operate between Dover and Calais for one year from 29 March 2019; and what assessment he has made of whether that demand could be met by current numbers of qualified UK (i) Ratings and (ii) Officers.

Chris Grayling:

I have made no such estimate or assessment.

■ Ferries: EU Countries

Karl Turner: [185570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on his Department chartering commercial roll-on roll-off ferries on the international market for operation between UK and European Union ports after 29 March 2019.

Chris Grayling:

We want and expect to see cross-Channel trade continue to move as freely as possible but it is right that we also consider a range of contingency plans to deal with any disruption. It would be premature, at this stage, to rule out any possible mechanism.

Karl Turner: [185572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will estimate the average (a) hourly pay rate and (b) tour of duty for (i) Ratings and (ii) Officers working in the European roll-on roll-off ferry industry.

Chris Grayling:

The information requested is not held by the department.

Ferries: Freight

Karl Turner: [<u>185575</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the total tonnage handled at UK ports in each year since 2010 was roll-on roll-off freight.

Chris Grayling:

The proportion of total tonnage handled by UK major ports in each year from 2010 to 2017 that was roll-on roll-off freight is displayed in the table below:

Roll-on 19% 19% 19% 20% 21% 23% 23% Roll-off freight as		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
a proportion of tonnage handled at all UK major ports	Roll-off freight as a proportio of tonnage handled at all UK major	s n	19%	19%	19%	20%	21%	23%	23%	

Poole

Source: Table PORT0201 available here https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/port-and-domestic-waterborne-freight-statistics-port

Karl Turner: [185576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list the UK ports with the infrastructure required to handle roll-on roll-off ferry freight units.

Chris Grayling:

To verify an exhaustive listing of such ports would entail disproportionate cost. However, in 2017 the following UK ports handled substantial volumes of ro-ro ferry units, including domestic traffic:

units, including domestic traffic: **DOVER** Grimsby & Immingham Liverpool Holyhead Belfast London Harwich Heysham Felixstowe Portsmouth Cairnryan Larne Loch Ryan Hull Teesport Warrenpoint Milford Haven Newhaven Fishguard Aberdeen

DOVER

Forth

Tyne

Orkney

Southampton

Plymouth

Bristol

■ Ferries: Ownership

Karl Turner: [185579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of merchant roll-on roll-off ferries in the international shipping industry that are owned by UK shipowners.

Chris Grayling:

I have made no such estimate of the number of merchant roll-on roll-off ferries in the international shipping industry that are owned by UK shipowners.

Ferries: Registration

Karl Turner: [185578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many merchant roll-on roll-off ferries are currently registered on Red Ensign Group shipping registers.

Chris Grayling:

The number of merchant roll-on-roll off ferries that are currently registered on Red Ensign Group shipping registers is 120; there are 112 on the United Kingdom register, five on the Isle of Man register and one each on the registers of Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands.

Merchant Shipping

Karl Turner: [185581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many UK merchant navy (a) Ratings and (b) Officers were working at sea in 1997; and if he will ensure that the annual UK Seafarer Statistics is extended to include the relevant statistics for the period from 1997 to 2001.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Estimates of UK officers active at sea from 1997 to 2001 are shown in the table

VEAD	Number of UK certificated officers active
YEAR	AT SEA, ASSUMING RETIREMENT AT AGE 62
1997	14,300
1998	13,550
1999	13,300
2000	12,510
2001	12,300

Equivalent estimates for ratings are not available.

The figures above were previously published as part of the annual seafarer statistics series and will be added when the 2018 statistics are published.

Railway Stations: Disability

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[186946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of railway stations have stepfree access.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Around 20% of stations in the UK have step free access to and between every platform, which accounts for approximately 75% of journeys.

This compares with only 50% of journeys in 2005.

We remain committed to continuing to invest in the accessibility of the railway and have made an additional £300m available for our Access for All programme during the next five year Control Period (2019-24).

Information on the facilities available at railway stations is collected and held by the Rail Delivery Group, rather than the Department.

Accessibility information about individual stations is published on the National Rail Enquiries website.

Railways: Timetables

Royston Smith: [187093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations his Department has received on whether rail companies amend rail operating timetables to avoid paying delay repay claims.

Joseph Johnson:

Compensation for delays is provided by Train Operating Companies (TOCs) in accordance with their published Passenger's Charter and is measured against the timetable in operation on the day of travel. Recently the SWR timetable has had to be

amended to mitigate the impact of the RMT strikes, but SWR are required to publicise these changes in advance of the day in question.

If a train is cancelled or delayed and a passenger has an Off-Peak, Super Off-Peak, Advance, or anytime ticket and decides not to travel, they will be entitled to a full refund of their ticket. If delays occur on the day compared to the temporary timetable in place, then passengers will be entitled to claim Delay Repay compensation for delays of 15 minutes or more on SWR.

Roads: Accidents

Ben Lake: [<u>185126</u>]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many road traffic accidents in (a) Wales and (b) England were caused by newly qualified drivers in each of the last five years.

Jesse Norman:

The Department does not hold information on how long drivers in reported road accidents held their licence for. The Department collects data on personal injury road accidents reported to the police, including contributory factors which the police identify when they attend the scene. This does not assign blame for the accident but gives an indication of factors the attending officer thought contributed to the accident. The following table shows the number and proportion of accidents where the contributory factor 'learner or inexperienced driver/rider' was reported by severity for England and Wales in the years 2013 to 2017.

REPORTED ACCIDENTS ¹ WHERE CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR 'LEARNER OR INEXPERIENCED DRIVER/RIDER' REPORTED BY SEVERITY AND COUNTRY, 2013 TO 2017

		Fatal accider	nts	Serious accider		Slight accider	nts	All acci	dents
		Numbe	rPer cent	Numbe	rPer cent	Numbe	rPer cent	Numbe	r Per cent
England	d2013	51	4	743	5	3,373	4	4,167	4
	2014	36	3	720	5	3,453	4	4,209	4
	2015	43	4	686	5	3,305	4	4,034	4
	2016	30	3	690	4	2,767	4	3,487	4
	2017	32	3	754	5	2,745	4	3,531	4
Wales	2013	2	2	36	4	171	4	209	4
	2014	4	4	49	5	172	4	225	4
	2015	4	4	46	5	146	4	196	4

REPORTED ACCIDENTS ¹ WHERE CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR 'LEARNER OR INEXPERIENCED DRIVER/RIDER' REPORTED BY SEVERITY AND COUNTRY, 2013 TO 2017

2016 2	2	43	5	161	5	206	5
2017 4	4	47	6	104	3	155	4

1 Includes only accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported. A total of 72 per cent of accidents reported to the police in 2017 in Great Britain met these criteria.

Source: DfT STATS19

Roads: Safety

Ben Lake: [185124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the restrictions on newly-qualified drivers in Northern Ireland on road safety in Northern Ireland.

Ben Lake: [185125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing restrictions on newly qualified drivers to improve road safety.

Jesse Norman:

There is evidence from countries in which a system of Graduated Driving Licences (GDL) has been implemented to suggest that it can have a beneficial effect on road safety.

The Department has decided to use the introduction of GDL in Northern Ireland as a pilot, to gather evidence on the potential for GDL in Great Britain. Officials from the Department and Northern Ireland are currently discussing how to take this work forward.

More widely, the Department is making good progress against an ambitious range of measures to enhance the safety of UK road users as set out in its 2015 Road Safety statement. This includes the doubling of penalty points for motorists using a phone whilst driving, which means that new drivers, within 2 years of passing their test, risk having their licence revoked if caught.

Taxis: Licensing

Daniel Zeichner: [185045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on which licensing authorities require (a) taxis and (b) private hire vehicles to have CCTV installed.

Daniel Zeichner: [185046]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on which licensing authorities (a) require both an enhanced DBS check for all (i) taxi drivers and (ii) private hire drivers and (b) check the barred list for both (i) taxi drivers and (ii) private hire drivers in the licensing process.

Daniel Zeichner: [185047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on which licensing authorities do not require disability equality training as a condition of licensing (a) taxi drivers and (b) private hire drivers.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Department for Transport conducts an annual survey of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities; this includes information on CCTV, Disclosure and Barring Service checks and training requirements, which can be found in TAXI0106:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/taxi01-taxis-private-hire-vehilces-and-their-drivers.

The complete results from the 2018 survey are available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-statistics-england-2018.

TREASURY

Air Passenger Duty

Lady Hermon: [186977]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his oral contribution of 29 October 2018, Official Report, column 665, who the members will be of the working group that will be established to progress plans for short-haul air passenger duty devolution; and what criteria will be used to appoint those members.

Mel Stride:

The Budget announced that, following the call for evidence on 'VAT, Air Passenger Duty and Tourism in Northern Ireland', the government will establish a technical working group to explore further the practical and legal challenges to changing APD in Northern Ireland.

Further details, including the membership of the group, will be announced in due course.

Children: Day Care

Tracy Brabin: [187121]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications for a tax-free childcare account have been started but not completed.

Elizabeth Truss:

The information requested is not readily available. Extensive analysis would be required to identify robust data on the number of childcare service applications that were started but subsequently not completed which would incur a disproportionate cost.

Children: Social Services

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[187039]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 5.16 of Budget 2018, what proportion of the £410 million for adult and children social care is for children's social care.

Elizabeth Truss:

Where necessary, local authorities should use the funding to ensure adult social care pressures don't create additional pressure on the NHS, and councils can also use it to improve their offer for older people, people with disabilities, and children.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[187040]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 5.16 of Budget 2018, how the £410 million for adult and children social care will be distributed among local councils.

Elizabeth Truss:

Details of the distributional allocation of the funding will be provided by the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government in due course.

Cryptocurrencies

Adam Afriyie: [186289]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Budget 2018 paragraph 4.26 on Cryptoassets Taskforce, if he will list those actions that will allow innovators to thrive in the cryptoasset sector.

John Glen:

The Cryptoassets Taskforce published its full report on Budget day. The report is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cryptoassets-taskforce.

The Cryptoassets Taskforce sets out actions on page 48 to 49 that HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Bank of England will take to protect consumers, allow innovation to thrive, and maintain the UK's international reputation as a safe and transparent place to do business in financial services, with high regulatory standards.

Disabled Facilities Grants: Children

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[187041]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 5.17 of Budget 2018, what proportion of the £55 million of the Disabled Facilities Grant will be allocated to programmes targeted at children.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Disabled Facilities Grant funds individual aids and adaptations to a person's home and is available to all disabled children, and disabled adults subject to a means test. Local authority decisions on grant awards will determine how the Grant is allocated between children and adults.

■ EU Budget: Contributions

Andrea Jenkyns:

[185050]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether payments from the public purse to the EU will require parliamentary approval after 29 March 2019.

John Glen:

The Government has set out its plans for parliamentary approval of payments to the EU required by the draft Withdrawal Agreement in its White Paper on Legislating for the Withdrawal Agreement. The Withdrawal Agreement Bill will include a provision that allows the Government to make payments due under the financial settlement, honouring its international commitments once the Withdrawal Agreement is in force. The Government has also proposed arrangements for reporting to Parliament on the details of the financial settlement.

Andrea Jenkyns: [185665]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to make any payments to the European Union and its institutions after 29 March 2019.

John Glen:

The Government has reached a fair financial settlement with the EU, honouring commitments made during the UK's period of membership, and has ensured a fair deal for UK taxpayers. This settlement has been agreed in the context of an overall agreement under Article 50 that includes the framework of our future partnership.

EU Grants and Loans

Daniel Zeichner: [185049]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the planned timeframe is for the distribution of funds to UK organisations to cover the competitive EU grant funding which has been guaranteed by his Department in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Elizabeth Truss:

If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, the Treasury will make funding available to departments next year to cover projects under the HMG Guarantee. Relevant departments will then allocate this funding to UK organisations.

Daniel Zeichner: [185619]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the funding allocated by the EU to underwrite successful bids by UK organisations to competitive EU grant programmes, including Horizon2020, will be funded from (a) UKRI's annual budget allocation or (b) additional funding allocated by his Department in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Elizabeth Truss:

If the UK leaves the EU next year without a deal, HM Treasury will make additional funding available to departments to cover projects under the HMG Guarantee, which includes Horizon 2020. Relevant departments will then be responsible for allocating this funding to UK organisations.

■ EU Internal Trade

Anneliese Dodds: [187143]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many provisions in financial and related regulations which require transposition into UK law in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal include thresholds measuring the proportion of (a) the entire EU market or (b) a specified number or grouping of member states.

John Glen:

The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EUWA) repeals the European Communities Act 1972 on the day the UK leaves the EU and incorporates into UK domestic law the existing body of directly applicable EU law. The purpose of the EUWA is to provide a functioning statute book on the day we leave the EU.

In some instances, the retained EU law relating to financial services includes provisions that relate to thresholds measuring the proportion of the entire EU market or a specified number or grouping of member states. We are aware of four provisions in the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulations (MiFIR) (Article 5(1)(a) and 1(b), and subparagraphs (3)-(6) and subparagraph (9), Article 9(5), Article 14(5), Article 36(5)), five provisions in the Commission Delegated Regulation amending MiFID 565/2017 (Article 12 to 16) and one provision in the Commission Delegated Regulation 2017/567 (Article 5(1)(a) and (b)).

Gaming Machines: Excise Duties

Mr Paul Sweeney: [187131]

To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the additional tax revenue that will accrue to the public purse from fixed odds betting terminals as a result of the delay in the introduction of the maximum stake from April 2019 to October 2019.

Robert Jenrick:

There is no delay as this is the first time the government has announced the date for the introduction of the £2 maximum stake on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.

The government made clear in May that the timing of implementation does not make any difference to the public finances as Remote Gaming Duty will be increased at the same time to offset the foregone revenue.

Insurance Premium Tax

Anneliese Dodds: [187137]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the rate of insurance premium tax on the cost of insurance premiums since 2011.

John Glen:

As my Rt Hon friend Mel Stride MP set out on 10 September 2018, it is difficult to isolate the impact of insurance premium tax rate increases from other factors impacting on the price of insurance products.

The Government nonetheless publishes prospective impact assessments for the changes in the rate of Insurance Premium Tax (IPT).

The assessment for the last change (announced at Autumn Statement 2016) can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/insurance-premium-tax-increase-of-standard-rate/insurance-premium-tax-increase-of-standard-rate

Job Creation: South Yorkshire

Dan Jarvis: [R] [<u>187031</u>]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his oral contribution of 29 October 2018, if he will make an estimate of the number of of 800,000 jobs that are projected to be created by 2023 that will be created in South Yorkshire.

Robert Jenrick:

The Office for Budget Responsibility forecast that employment will rise by 800,000 over their forecast horizon. However, they do not produce regional breakdowns for their forecasts.

There are 205,000 more people in employment in Yorkshire and the Humber than in 2010.

Mortgages: Private Rented Housing

John Healey: [184871]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that mortgage lenders do not prevent landlords leasing properties to tenants in receipt of social security benefits.

John Glen:

The Government wants to ensure tenants in receipt of housing benefit are able to access suitable properties.

UK Finance has assured us that the majority of active Buy-to-Let lenders do not prevent landlords leasing properties to tenants in receipt of social security benefits. Therefore, any landlord who wants to let to benefit claimants should be able to easily find a lender who will allow that.

It is also worth noting that only about a third of private rental properties are financed by a buy to let mortgage.

Pensions: Public Sector

Stephanie Peacock:

[187161]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Budget 2018, paragraph 1.60, if he will publish a breakdown of the £4.7 billion of extra DEL allocated to the reserves to cover additional costs arising from the reduction in the discount rate for employer contributions to public sector pension schemes.

Elizabeth Truss:

The valuations of Public Service Pensions Schemes are ongoing. The Treasury is undertaking work with departments and devolved administrations to agree the allocation of the additional funding.

Regeneration: Belfast

Mr Paul Sweeney: [187132]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how the funding allocated to Belfast after the bank buildings fire will be distributed and administered to local businesses and residents.

Elizabeth Truss:

Funding will be added to the Northern Ireland block grant. It will then be allocated to Belfast City Council according to the Northern Ireland Civil Service's own processes.

Revenue and Customs: Disclosure of Information

Chris Law: [187053]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HMRC guidance entitled Partnership pack: preparing for a no deal EU exit published on 22 October 2018, if HMRC will rescind any non-disclosure agreements they required organisations to sign in order to be able to discuss with them border arrangements in various scenarios for the UK leaving the EU.

Mel Stride:

HMRC use Non-Disclosure Agreements only on the most sensitive and confidential discussions.

The Partnership Pack has been developed by HMRC to support stakeholders by explaining the practical arrangements that would be in place if we exit the EU without a deal.

Revenue and Customs: Brexit

Mr Jonathan Lord: [185033]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the preparedness of HMRC for the UK leaving the EU.

Mel Stride:

The Government remains confident we will agree a mutually advantageous deal with the EU.

It is however the duty of a responsible Government to continue to prepare for a range of potential outcomes including the unlikely event of no deal.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer therefore continues to work closely with HMRC officials and has made funding available to ensure the department is ready for EU exit, whatever the outcome of negotiations.

■ Revenue and Customs: ICT

Chris Law: [<u>187052</u>]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 3 of the HMRC Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, what steps HMRC has taken to ensure that computer applications it has using the SAP platform are accessible by disabled staff.

Mel Stride:

HMRC is working closely with SAP and other supporting suppliers to address known accessibility issues on the SAP platform as part of a wider look at how the department can improve the accessibility of technology across its estate. HMRC and SAP are using established accessibility frameworks to ensure common standards are met, and working to make sure the platform meets the accessibility needs of our department's staff.

Revenue and Customs: Pay

Chris Law: [187054]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HMRC employees are paid less than £8.21 per hour.

Mel Stride:

Currently, HMRC have 1,244 employees who are paid less than £8.21 per hour.

■ Roads: South East

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[907479]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the potential economic merits of improving the Reading to Gatwick airport road corridor.

Robert Jenrick:

The first Road Investment Strategy brought over £15bn of investment to England's strategic roads between 2015-2020. This included a number of schemes improving many of the strategic road links on the Reading-Gatwick road corridor.

At Budget 2018, the Chancellor announced that the National Roads Fund will be £28.8 billion from 2020-2025. We expect £25.3 billion of this will fund the Roads Investment Strategy 2, which is the largest ever investment in England's strategic roads.

HMT ministers and officials continue to work closely with their DfT counterparts to consider and monitor the delivery of specific investments as part of the Road Investment Strategy.

■ Treasury: Talk Money Week

Andrew Gwynne: [187318]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions (a) he and (b) officials in his office have had with representatives of Talk Money Week.

Andrew Gwynne: [187319]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of Talk Money Week.

John Glen:

HM Treasury is in regular discussions with the Money Advice (MAS), the main organisers of Talk Money Week, about debt advice, financial capability and financial education policy. The Government strongly supports and looks forward to Talk Money Week and I am providing the keynote speech at the Talk Money Conference on the 14th November.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Department for Work and Pensions: Contracts

Chris Ruane: [186963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 31 October 2018 to Question 184391 on Department for Work and Pensions: Contracts, how many contracts her Department has issued with any such clauses in each of the past three years; what proportion of those contracts have been breached; and what sanctions her Department has in place in the event that the clause is breached.

Justin Tomlinson:

In the last three years the Department has awarded 366 contracts. Management information on this type of provision is not readily available however the appropriate form of this type of standard provision is widely used in contracts across both the public and private sector.

In the event of any contractual breach the Department would pursue a range of remedies depending on the severity. Remedies range from formal remediation plans, through financial redress to termination of the contract.

To date the Department does not have any instances where a breach of the referenced terms has been pursued.

Department for Work and Pensions: Databases

Caroline Flint: [184872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations she has received from agencies of her Department on the effectiveness of data sharing with her Department.

Justin Tomlinson:

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) increased the obligations on both data controllers and processors in respect of data sharing. DWP engages with all of its Agencies (Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs)). Each ALB is also required to provide a Certificate of Assurance regarding compliance with GDPR regulations. Any representations on the effectiveness of data sharing with the Department will be addressed in line with the GDPR. At the moment there are none to consider.

Housing Benefit

Ms Karen Buck: [184859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average shortfall is between housing benefit and the rent of people affected by the benefit cap who are in receipt of (a) jobseekers allowance, (b) employment support allowance, (c) income support and (d) another benefit.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information in the table shows average shortfall between housing benefit and the contractual rent of people affected by the benefit cap in May 2018.

MAIN BENEFIT	AVERAGE SHORTFALL	
a) Jobseeker's Allowance	£ 64.38	
b) Employment Support Allowance	£ 61.53	
c) Income Support	£ 59.48	

MAIN BENEFIT

AVERAGE SHORTFALL

d) Other

£ 78.57

We acknowledge there could be a potential rental shortfall due to various Welfare Reforms, for example:

- the Benefit Cap;
- Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (RSRS) in the social rented sector;
- Changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, including the 4 year freeze.

These figures don't isolate which deductions a benefit cap claimant has applied to their Housing Benefit. It should be noted however DHPs can be used by local authorities to mitigate rental shortfalls faced by claimants.

■ Jobcentres: Computers

Frank Field: [186221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of computers available to claimants in Jobcentre Plus have in-built access to assistive technology.

Alok Sharma:

Access to relevant assistive technology through jobcentres is provided in two ways:

- Availability through free Wi-Fi for customers to use their own device where they have user specific assistive technology; and
- Over 8,000 devices/computers available to customers which have standard assistive functionality available with the user being able to configure keyboard and mouse settings, use a magnifier function, sticky keys, high contrast and an on screen keyboard. The department is undertaking a programme of upgrading the current devices and is exploring opportunities to increase the availability of user specific or individually configured assistive technology.

Personal Independence Payment: Cancer

Jess Phillips: [186331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with (a) leukaemia, (b) myeloma, (c) hodgkin's lymphoma and (d) non-hodgkin's lymphoma are in receipt of personal independence payments.

Jess Phillips: [186333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with (a) leukaemia, (b) myeloma, (c) hodgkin's lymphoma and (d) non-hodgkin's lymphoma have (i) been reassessed from disability living allowance to personal independence payments and (ii) received a reduced rate of award.

Sarah Newton:

The Department publishes a range of detailed statistics for Personal Independence Payment (PIP on Stat-Xplore: https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/. Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html.

These statistics include monthly caseloads (claims in payment) for claimants of PIP broken down by disability including leukaemia, myeloma, Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Notes

- The category "Leukaemia" includes 6 categories under the DLA computer system -Leukaemia - myelogenous (myeloid) acute, Leukaemia - lymphoblastic – acute, Leukaemia - myeloid - chronic, Leukaemia - lymphocytic – chronic, Leukaemias -Other / type not known, Cancer and Leukaemia.
- The PIP Reassessment outcome in Table 1 shows the outcome of the first DWP decision on each reassessment claim (i.e. prior to any reconsideration, appeal action and award review), where that decision was made between 1st January 2015 and 31st October 2017.
- DLA Entitlement is the DLA award at the time of PIP reassessment registration.
- Reassessment outcomes are for individuals who were aged 16 to 64 on 8th April 2013
- Data includes PIP claims made under both Normal Rules and Special Rules for the Terminally III. However, under DLA a claimant can be recorded as "Terminally III" rather than as having a named disability. Therefore, such cases are excluded from the above figures.
- The statistics provided relate to DLA award levels so primary disabling condition is reported as recorded on the DLA computer system. Claimants may often have multiple disabling conditions upon which the decision is based but only the primary condition is shown in these statistics.
- Primary disabling condition may be recorded differently on the PIP and DLA computer systems.
- Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
- # indicates a value of less than 10.
- Totals may not sum due to rounding.
- Great Britain only.

Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

David Simpson: [184930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will undertake a review of the accuracy of the assessments made by personal independence payment assessors.

Sarah Newton:

We are committed to ensuring claimants receive high quality, objective assessments. All Health Professionals who undertake the assessments are subject to on-going audit by our assessment providers to ensure that they deliver high quality assessments. The Department also undertakes independent audit to ensure that the advice provided to the Department's decision makers is of suitable quality, fully explained and justified.

All Health Professionals undertaking PIP assessments are highly trained practitioners who must have at least 2 years post full registration experience or less than 2 years by individual, prior, written agreement with the Department.

Poverty: Children

[187025] Ian Lavery:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the effect of the full roll out of universal credit on the number of children living in poverty in (a) the UK, (b) the north east, (c) Northumberland and (d) Wansbeck constituency.

Justin Tomlinson:

We have not made an assessment of the information requested.

However, Universal Credit is designed to help people out of poverty. In line with this strategy, Universal Credit is designed to strengthen incentives for parents to move into and progress in work, and it is working. Universal Credit claimants move into work faster and spend more time looking for work.

In addition, Universal Credit provides improved support for childcare for parents, enabling them to reclaim up to 85% of their eligible childcare costs, which is expected to help 500,000 additional families at a cost of around £350m per year.

Further improvements to UC were also announced in the Budget. For example, work allowance rates will be increased by £1000 from April 2019, directing additional support to some of the most vulnerable low paid working families. A two-week run-on of legacy benefits was also announced, enabling claimants to continue to receive Jobseekers' Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, or Income Support for the first fortnight of a Universal Credit claim, with no need to pay back the overlap.

Scotland Act 1998 (Agency Arrangements) (Specification) Order 2018

lan Murray: [185566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 9 October 2018 to Question 173561, what other agreements have been made under the Scotland Act 1998 (Agency Arrangements) (Specification) Order 2018; and whether the Scottish Government has advised it will ask for further agreements.

Alok Sharma:

The Agency Agreement between the Department for Work and Pensions and Scottish Ministers for the continued payment of Carer's Allowance is the first

agreement made under the Scotland Act 1998 (Agency Arrangements) (Specification) Order 2018.

The need for further agency arrangements will be considered on a case by case basis and will be subject to UK and Scottish Government agreement. This will be dependent on Scottish Government plans for taking over benefits once executive competence transfers in April 2020.

Social Security Benefits

Ms Karen Buck: [184855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2018 to Question 15879 on Social Security Benefits, how many of those applicants affected by the lower cap in May 2018 were affected by it in November 2013.

Justin Tomlinson:

Of the 27,400 households who had their Housing Benefit capped at November 2013, 2,900 (11%) households had their Housing Benefit capped in May 2018.

Ms Karen Buck: [184858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish the updated research into the effect of the lower benefit cap; and if she will place a copy of the brief for this work in the Library.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is currently undertaking an evaluation of the lower, tiered benefit cap. It has commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to carry out research through a quantitative longitudinal survey of capped households under Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, and qualitative case studies of local authorities. This research is being undertaken alongside in-house DWP analysis of capped households, which will be peer reviewed by the IFS.

The Department expects to publish the full findings by the spring 2019; the published report will be available on gov.uk.

Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Mr Roger Godsiff: [184881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department provides to (a) departmental staff and (b) employees of (i) Capita and (ii) Maximus on when to contact a claimant's healthcare provider to request medical evidence.

Sarah Newton:

The department has clearly set out the requirements for when DWP and/or the Assessment Providers should request further medical evidence.

DWP/Assessment Provider Health Professional will consider obtaining further evidence if there is a significant gap in the available information, there is doubt about the level of function or if it is required in order to provide robust advice. There does

not need to be independent corroborating evidence if the available information is comprehensive, clearly outlines the extent and nature of any functional problems and, above all, is consistent with the claimed condition(s).

Universal Credit

Jon Trickett: [184879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to what extent the Behavioural Insights Team was involved in designing the technical infrastructure for universal credit.

Alok Sharma:

The Government's Behavioural Insights Team has not been involved in designing the technical infrastructure for Universal Credit Full Service, as there is a specific user researcher team in DWP that takes care of this element.

The design of the Universal Credit Full Service is based around user-centred design, which is an iterative design process in which designers focus on users of the service and their needs in each phase of the design process.

David Simpson: [184928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department's policy is on universal credit support for parents with a third child.

Alok Sharma:

The policy to provide additional Universal Credit support for a maximum of two children encourages families who receive benefits to make the same financial decisions as those families who support themselves solely through work. We recognise that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family and exceptions have been put in place to protect certain groups.

When moving to Universal Credit under the managed migration process, families' existing entitlement will be protected, so long as they remain responsible for the same children and entitled to benefit. Child Benefit continues to be paid for all children, and, within Universal Credit the additional element for any disabled children is paid regardless of the total number of children in the household.

Additional help for eligible childcare costs are also available for all children. Universal Credit is more generous in terms of childcare costs with an increased level of support for childcare costs: from 70 per cent in legacy benefits, to 85 per cent within Universal Credit. This means that working families claiming Universal Credit can reclaim up to 85 per cent of their eligible childcare costs each month, up to a maximum of £646.35 for one child and £1,108.04 for two or more children. Universal Credit childcare costs can be claimed for one month prior to starting work, to enable a child to settle into a new routine. In addition, the Flexible Support Fund is also available to help parents pay childcare deposits or up-front fees.

David Simpson: [184929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of claimants of universal credit that moved into full-time employment.

Alok Sharma:

Since 2010, we are helping on average 1,000 more people into work each and every day – the vast majority of which are full-time permanent roles.

Universal Credit replaces six benefits with one, to simplify the system and make work pay. As a result, people claiming Universal Credit move into work faster, stay in work longer and spend more time looking to increase their earnings. Universal Credit also provides more help with childcare costs, a dedicated Work Coach, scraps the 16-hour 'cliff edge' and the prohibitive tax rates should someone start work. When it is fully rolled out we expect Universal Credit will generate £8 billion in economic benefits every year and increase the total number of hours worked by 113 million per year for those already in work.

In our recent Universal Credit Full Service Claimant Survey, we found around six in ten claimants were looking to increase their hours and/or income, primarily by increasing the hours of their existing role. The survey can be accessed at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-full-service-claimant-survey.

Further information on the impact of Universal Credit on the labour market can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-understanding-its-impact-on-the-labour-market

David Simpson: [184931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to integrate housing benefit rates into a single universal credit benefit.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Universal Credit award includes the amount for housing costs and replaces Housing Benefit for working age claimants.

Frank Field: [186220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 146 of the Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2018, published in 29 October 2018, if she will make an assessment of the contribution of (a) the cost of administering universal credit, (b) policy changes affecting the level payable under universal credit and (c) any other factors to universal credit becoming more expensive than the legacy system would have been from 2019-20 to 2022-23.

Alok Sharma:

As detailed in Office for Budget Responsibility's Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2018 (OBR EFO) Universal Credit is now forecast to be more generous to claimants than the legacy benefit system. This is a combination of forecasting changes which are detailed on page 150 of the OBR's EFO as well as the impacts of the Budget 2018

which can be seen in table 4.28 and on pages 150 to 153. Therefore it is not the cost of administering the system which has caused these changes.

In our published Universal Credit Full Business Case Summary we set out that, Universal Credit will be less costly to deliver than the legacy benefit system, and that Universal Credit operational costs break even against legacy operational savings from 2019/20 and are reduced in steady state by over £0.3 billion (circa 30%) on a like for like basis.

Margaret Greenwood:

[186339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 78 of the Red Book and page 11 of the policy costings for Budget 2018, what the schedule is for the start and end of (a) the pilot for the managed migration of people claiming legacy claimants to universal credit and (b) the managed migration as a whole.

Alok Sharma:

We have carefully considered the plan for migrating claimants to Universal Credit from their existing legacy benefits; reflecting on feedback from stakeholders, we have extended the testing period and moved back the start date to ensure we have the time necessary to get this right.

Managed migration will commence in July 2019 during which up to 10,000 claimants will be migrated as part of the testing phase. This gradual and steady approach will allow us to ensure that the process works for everyone. We expect the test phase to run for a year.

We will begin to migrate claimants at scale later in 2020, completing the process in December 2023.

Margaret Greenwood:

[186340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, at what level work allowances are planned to be set at from April 2019 as a result of the change to work allowances announced in Budget 2018 for (a) lone parents (i) with and (ii) without housing costs, (b) couples with children (A) with and (B) without housing costs, (c) single people without children (1) with and (2) without housing costs, (d) couples without children people (i) with and (ii) without housing costs and (e) people with limited capability for work (A) with and (B) without housing costs.

Alok Sharma:

Currently, if a single claimant (or either claimant in a couple) has responsibility for a child or qualifying young person, or has limited capability for work, they will receive a work allowance of £198 per month for those with housing costs and £409 per month for those without housing costs.

As announced at the Autumn Budget 2018 we will put an extra £1.7bn a year into work allowances, increasing them by £1,000 a year, resulting in 2.4m families keeping substantially more of their earnings before the earnings taper applies.

The proposed benefit and pension rates for 2019/20 including the new Universal Credit work allowance rates will be announced to Parliament via a written ministerial statement later this month and will be subject to Parliamentary approval.

Margaret Greenwood:

[186342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of claimants of legacy benefits who will migrate to universal credit without transitional protection.

Alok Sharma:

Around 2 million households will be moved onto Universal Credit as part of the managed migration process.

900,000 families will receive transitional protection to ensure their benefit allowance remains the same at the point of transition. The other claimants who are migrated onto Universal Credit as part of managed migration will receive the same or an increased entitlement allowance as they receive on legacy benefits.

Transitional protection is dependent on the managed migration regulations receiving parliamentary approval when they come before Parliament this autumn.

Stephen Timms: [186921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the decision was taken to stop the support provided to claimants of existing benefits and tax credits for between three and five weeks when they are migrated to universal credit.

Alok Sharma:

New claimants to Universal Credit have always been able to apply for a Universal Credit Advance in their first month if they need some financial support until the first regular payment of Universal Credit is made.

We have previously increased the maximum amount available for advances from 50 per cent to 100 per cent of the total award, and increased the repayment period from 6 months to 12 months. Last month's Budget extended - from October 2021 - the maximum period over which an advance can be recovered, from 12 to 16 months. From October 2019, we will also reduce the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from a Universal Credit award from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance

Additionally in the Budget, it was announced that income related legacy benefits, Income Support, income related Employment and Support Allowance and income based Jobseeker's Allowance will continue for two weeks after a claim for Universal Credit has been made, from July 2020. This will apply to all managed migration cases and natural migration cases where a claim to Universal Credit ends entitlement to the legacy benefit. This measure means that around 1.1 million people will see a one-off gain of approximately £200, between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

Alex Cunningham: [187020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants migrating from employment support allowance to universal credit will be have to provide medical evidence to demonstrate vulnerability.

Alok Sharma:

Being vulnerable covers a wide range of factors, not just those related to having health conditions and disabilities and as such no medical evidence is necessary to demonstrate vulnerability.

The managed migration process is being designed to ensure a smooth transition of continuous support for all claimants, especially the most vulnerable. The Department is working with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that the managed migration process works for everyone.

Managed migration will commence in July 2019 during which up to 10,000 claimants will be migrated as part of the testing phase. This gradual and steady approach will allow us to ensure that the process works for everyone.

Alex Cunningham: [187021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2018 to Question 177771 on Universal Credit, whether the Department's plans to check evidence of complex needs will include a requirement to undertake a home visit.

Alex Cunningham: [<u>1870</u>22]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2018 to Question 177771 on Universal Credit, whether the Department's plans to check evidence of complex needs will include a requirement to contact a claimant's healthcare professional where that information is known.

Sarah Newton:

We have improved how our Work Coaches and Case Workers view the claimant's

Universal Credit account so they can identify a vulnerable claimant, in order to tailor the support they need. This may include contacting the claimant's healthcare professional.

We are taking a slow, measured approach to managed migration and this will allow for on-going evaluation of the process to ensure that it is working successfully and will allow us to refine our methods to support claimants.

Where it is identified that existing benefit claimants are vulnerable or have complex needs and they have not made a new UC claim by the deadline day, their existing benefit claims are not terminated. This can be delayed until the claimant feels comfortable continuing with the managed migration process or for a home visit to be arranged to help them make a new UC claim.

Christine Jardine: [187124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long people have waited on average to receive the elements of universal credit that are paid on the basis of health conditions or disabilities by condition in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what comparative assessment she has made of that waiting time with the average waiting time for standard allowance.

Sarah Newton:

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

Christine Jardine: [187125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in receipt of universal credit have a (a) health condition (b) disability) and (c) a diagnosis of cancer.

Sarah Newton:

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

Christine Jardine: [187126]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is for a claimant of universal credit to receive a UC50 form as part of their work capability assessment as a result of a (a) health condition and (b) disability for each of those conditions and disabilities.

Alok Sharma:

The information requested is not available. The Capability for Work questionnaire UC50 and covering letter is issued to the claimant by first class mail the day after they are referred for a Work Capability Assessment. They have a period of four weeks in which to return the completed questionnaire, and are issued a further reminder letter if they have not replied within three weeks.

Universal Credit: Disability

Debbie Abrahams: [187026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of measures related to universal credit announced in Budget 2018 on disabled people who are (a) in work and (b) out of work.

Debbie Abrahams: [187027]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she had made of the levels of spending on social security for disabled people as a result of the provisions of Budget 2018.

Sarah Newton:

We will spend over £50 billion in 2018/19 on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions.

In the budget we have announced that work allowance rates will be increased by £1000 from April 2019 and uprated in line with inflation thereafter. Raising the current work allowances will direct additional funding to working disabled people by allowing them to keep more of their earnings before the earnings taper is applied. By increasing the work allowances many disabled families on UC will be £630 better off, in a package worth £1.7bn in 2023/24.

It has also been announced that income related legacy benefits, Income Support (IS), Income Related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance will continue for two weeks after a claim for Universal Credit has been made. This change will particularly support vulnerable claimants who may have been on benefits for some time, have little or no savings to fall back on and currently rely on regular payments at shorter intervals.

We have also previously announced that transitional payments for former recipients of Severe Disability Premium (SDP) and protection for those who are receiving SDP as part of their existing benefit entitlement. These claimants will now only move to UC with transitional protection. Those who have already moved to UC will be considered for a lump sum payment that will be back-dated to the start of their UC claim, and will receive ongoing monthly payments.

These regulations provide transitional support to recipients of the SDP while removing the complexity of dealing with different rules for seven different disability additions. 500,000 vulnerable people receive the SDP alongside their benefit awards. All of these people will ultimately move to UC and benefit from this enhanced support.

Not replicating the Severe Disability Premium in UC means the government can target additional support to a wider group. UC provides a higher level of support for the most severely disabled people than the benefit it replaces, worth up to £328.32 per month.

Universal Credit: Self-employed

Grahame Morris: [185567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the effect of the introduction of full service of universal credit on people that are selfemployed.

Grahame Morris: [185568]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the effectiveness of the universal credit minimum income floor in supporting self-employed people who experience significant earnings fluctuation.

Alok Sharma:

[Holding answer 5 November 2018]: Universal Credit encourages all claimants with a work expectation to find and progress in work. The Minimum Income Floor (MIF) is intended to encourage claimants to grow their monthly earnings to what they could expect to earn at minimum wage.

The 2018 Autumn Budget announced a 12 month exemption period from the MIF for all gainfully self-employed claimants new to Universal Credit or new to selfemployment. We plan to introduce this from July 2019 with full implementation from September 2020. We will also continue with the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) scheme from April 2019 onwards. The NEA provides support and mentoring for benefit claimants who are looking to start or develop their business.

Plans are in place for an evaluation of the MIF and a large-scale tracking survey of self-employed Universal Credit claimants with a MIF applied to their claim.

Debbie Abrahams: [187028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of changes to universal credit announced in Budget 2018 on selfemployed people.

Alok Sharma:

The legacy system serves to prop up unsustainable enterprises indefinitely and trap claimants in welfare dependency. We want to support people to be self-employed when it is the right thing for them to do to be financially self-sufficient. Key to this is continuing to support people in, or considering, self-employment to progress to a level of sustained financial self-sufficiency.

We recognise that it takes time for new businesses to grow and that even established businesses can experience difficulties. Last month's Autumn Budget announced a 12-month exemption period from the Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor (MIF) for all new gainfully self-employed claimants, and an extension of the New Enterprise Allowance programme for a further two years beyond its current expiry date of March 2019.

We already provide a 12-month start-up period where the MIF is not applied for newly created businesses. The new 12-month exemption period will include new claims, such as from those running a long-standing business and those moving from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, whether following a change of circumstances or moved by DWP. This also includes those existing Universal Credit claimants who become gainfully self-employed.

These changes will provide all gainfully self-employed claimants with an equal chance, and support from specially trained work coaches, to grow their earnings, prepare and adjust for the application of the MIF. Currently, we forecast that, in 2023/24 130,000 self-employed people will have the space to grow a successful business when moving on to Universal Credit

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

Inspection of the Royal Navy Police by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

Minister of State (Ministry of Defence) (Mr Tobias Ellwood): [HCWS1072]

I wish to inform the House and that I am laying before the House today the second report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) Inspection of the Royal Navy Police (RNP).

The Armed Forces Act 2011 places a duty on HMICFRS to inspect and report to the Ministry of Defence on the independence and effectiveness of investigations carried out by each Service police force, and this is HMICFRS second statutory inspection report on the RNP.

I consider this report to be a very positive endorsement of the RNP providing assurance from an independent civilian authority that the RNP's Police Performance Inspections (PPI) provide the assurance required that the activity of RNP units meet legal and professional standards. No recommendations were made and only four areas for improvement were identified. The Royal Navy accepts the report's findings and through the implementation of a revised PPI process, it is considered that all four areas of improvement have now been addressed.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

General Affairs Council, November 2018

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the European Union (Mr Robin Walker): [HCWS1068]

Lord Callanan, Minister of State for Exiting the European Union, has made the following statement:

I will attend the General Affairs Council in Brussels on 12 November 2018 to represent the UK. Until we leave the European Union, we remain committed to fulfilling our rights and obligations as a full member.

The provisional agenda includes:

Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 - 2027

Ministers will discuss progress on the Multiannual Financial Framework proposals with the Presidency.

Preparation of the European Council on 13-14 December 2018

The Council will discuss the draft agenda for the December European Council.

European Semester 2019 - Roadmap

The Austrian Presidency and the incoming Romanian Presidency will present the timetable for the 2019 European Semester, which will provide a framework for the coordination of economic policies across the EU.

Legislative programming - Commission's Work Programme 2019

The Commission will set out the legislative and other initiatives that it intends to present to the Council and European Parliament during 2019.

Subsidiarity Package

The Commission will present its subsidiarity package which was published on 23 October. In those areas which do not form part of the EU's exclusive competence, the principle of subsidiarity means that action should only be taken at EU level when the desired objectives cannot be effectively achieved by action taken at national or regional level.

Annual Rule of Law dialogue

An annual rule of law dialogue has formed part of the GAC agenda since 2014. The Presidency has invited Ministers to consider the topic of 'Trust in Public Institutions' for this year's dialogue.

Rule of law in Poland - Article 7(1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

The Commission will provide Ministers with an update on the rule of law in Poland.

Values of the Union - Hungary / Article 7(1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

Ministers will discuss the Article 7(1) procedure in relation to Hungary.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Health and social care provider update

Minister of State for Care (Caroline Dinenage):

[HCWS1071]

Yesterday, in line with duties set out in the 2014 Care Act the Care Quality Commission notified 84 Local Authorities that they were issuing a Stage 6 notification for the homecare provider, Allied Healthcare.

I would like to update the House on why the Care Quality Commission has taken this action now, and steps being taken to assure people with care and support needs being met by Allied Healthcare that they should not suffer a gap in their care service – even if their care is funded privately.

A Stage 6 notification is intended to be an early warning to local authorities that CQC consider that the business failure of a provider in their area is likely and this could lead to services ceasing for people who receive care from that provider.

The Care Quality Commission has not taken this decision lightly. They have continued to monitor the financial sustainability of Allied Healthcare since it secured a Company Voluntary Arrangement in May. It has been speaking with Allied Heathcare's senior management team on a regular basis to seek assurances about the company's

performance and the sustainability of its future finances. The company has not been able to provide the necessary assurances beyond 30th November 2018 and the Care Quality Commission has taken this prudent action in order to give local authorities the time to prepare their contingency plans to ensure continuity of care, in the event that it is required.

Allied Healthcare can take action to reassure the Care Quality Commission of its financial position beyond 30 November 2018, in which case the Care Quality Commission would revise their position accordingly. The Care Quality Commission is clear that there is no current service disruption. Allied Healthcare remain responsible for these services and their staff.

The law was changed in 2014 giving the Care Quality Commission a new responsibility to monitor the financial sustainability of the largest and most difficult to replace care providers across the country. It means the CQC can notify local authorities of the likelihood of service disruption caused by service failure earlier so that they have more time to prepare their plans to protect individuals.

Local authorities have a statutory duty under their section 48(2) Care Act to meet the needs of individuals temporarily if their care provider is no longer able to carry on. Business failure is a normal part of a functioning market and local authorities have appropriate plans in place to minimise disruption of services. The Care Quality Commission has provided local authorities with time to begin their preparations. This will include working with Allied Healthcare to ensure the local authority is given an up to date list of all people the company is providing care for, whether this is state or privately funded. Local authorities will be reviewing contingency plans and speaking to other providers to ensure continuity of care.

The Care Quality Commission and my Department are closely monitoring the situation. They are also working closely with the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and NHS England to ensure that local authorities are supported in their contingency planning to ensure individuals' care and support needs continue to be met.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Bellwin Scheme for the February 2018 explosion and fire in Leicester

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Local Government (Rishi Sunak):

[HCWS1070]

On 25 February 2018, there was a major explosion and fire in Hinckley Road, Leicester which resulted in the tragic loss of 5 lives. I am satisfied that financial assistance under the Bellwin scheme is justified to cover eligible costs incurred by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Authority in dealing with this emergency.

A scheme will therefore be established under section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Grant will be paid to the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Authority to cover 100 per cent of their eligible costs incurred above a threshold.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Pre-Council: EU Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) 9 November 2018

Minister of State for Trade Policy (George Hollingbery):

[HCWS1067]

The EU Trade Foreign Affairs Council will take place in Brussels on 9 November 2018. I will represent the UK.

The substantive items on 9 November will be:

Legislative items: information from the Presidency about the Regulation on Foreign Direct Investment Screening; information from The Presidency about the Regulation on implementing horizontal bilateral safeguards in certain agreements.

Non-legislative items: the state of play of World Trade Organization modernisation, and an update on the state of play of the ongoing EU trade negotiations. The Commission will also present a report on the implementation of Free Trade Agreements.

TRANSPORT

EU Transport Council

Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling):

[HCWS1069]

I attended the informal meeting of members of the Transport and Environment Councils in Graz, Austria on 29 th and 30 th October.

The programme for the Informal meetings included separate sessions for Transport and Environment Ministers and a joint session for both Ministers entitled "Starting a new Era; Clean, safe and affordable mobility for Europe".

On 29 th October, Transport Ministers were invited to discuss the Commission's proposal on 'Discontinuing seasonal changes of time (summer time)'. My Noble Friend, The Rt Hon Lord Henley, (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) represented the UK at this session and explained that the UK Government does not support the proposed directive. He also noted the Commission had fallen short on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as has been highlighted by the decision of the House of Lords to issue a reasoned opinion. (The House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee has subsequently recommended that the House of Commons also issue a reasoned opinion on this matter.)

There was broad consensus in Council that the timetable proposed by the Commission was too short and thus there was widespread support for the Presidency's intention to provide for an extension. A small minority of Member States were notably critical of the proposal while the majority welcomed the initiative, albeit noting its deficiencies. Several Member States advocated the need to coordinate across borders in order to know the final time zone arrangements before taking the decision to abolish daylight saving.

Environment Ministers were then invited to discuss 'The Future of European Environmental Policy'. The Secretary of State for the Environment was represented by

officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Ministers broadly agreed on the need for an eighth Environment Action Programme (EAP) with a consensus that it should take full account of climate change given the Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Global Warming of 1.5 Celsius published last month.

At the joint session for Transport & Environment Ministers on 30 th October, interventions were wide-ranging with common themes being the need to move towards zero emissions vehicles and enabling people to choose sustainable ways to travel. These themes were reflected in the Presidency's "Graz Declaration" published after the meeting. For the UK, I stressed the importance of ambition to accelerate the development and introduction of zero emission vehicles, recalling that the Prime Minister had hosted the world's first zero emission vehicle summit in Birmingham recently.

The subject for the afternoon session was road safety. Transport Ministers shared experiences with progress to date in reducing casualties and their perception of the challenges in making more progress. In my intervention I noted that human error was a factor in over 85% of road accidents, and that connected and automated vehicles offered opportunities to make our roads safer.

In the margins I met with a number of EU Transport Ministers to discuss current EU transport business and how relationships will evolve as the UK leaves the EU.

TREASURY

ECOFIN: 6 November 2018

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond):

[HCWS1074]

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) will be held in Brussels on 06 November 2018. The UK will be represented by Mark Bowman (Director General, International Finance, HM Treasury). The Council will discuss the following:

European Free Trade Association (EFTA) dialogue

EU Finance Ministers will be joined by representatives of the EFTA countries to exchange views on the opportunities and challenges of FinTech to the financial sector and economic growth.

Early Morning Session

The Eurogroup President will brief the Council on the outcomes of the 05 November meeting of the Eurogroup, and the European Commission will provide an update on the current economic situation in the EU. The Council will also exchange views on the Annual Report of the European Fiscal Board.

Digital Services Tax

The Council will exchange views regarding the state of play of the negotiations on the Digital Services Tax Directive.

Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals

The Austrian Presidency will provide an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

European Court of Auditors' Annual Report

The President of the Court of Auditors will present the Auditors' report on the implementation of the budget of the European Union for the 2017 financial year.

EU Statistical Package

The Council will be invited to adopt Council Conclusions on the autumn EU statistical package and to review progress achieved, providing guidance for further work in this area.

Conclusions on Climate Finance

The Council will be invited to adopt Council Conclusions on climate finance as part of the annual process in the run up to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) in Poland on 02-14 Dec.

Follow-up to the G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and of the IMF Annual Meetings in Indonesia

The Austrian Presidency and the Commission will present the main outcomes of the G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and of the IMF Annual Meetings between 11 and 12 October in Bali, Indonesia

■ The Double Taxation Convention between the United Kingdom And Austria

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride): [HCWS1073]

A Double Taxation Convention with Austria was signed on 23 October 2018. The text of the Convention 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 will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Delivering Collective Defined Contribution Pension Schemes

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy Opperman): [HCWS1075]

Today the Government is publishing the consultation paper on Collective Defined Contribution Schemes. This sets out our vision for this new form of occupational pension scheme. We will be seeking stakeholder views on how we can best implement such schemes. CDC schemes will offer a new option for employers looking to help their employees save for retirement. A copy of this document will be placed in the library.

The UK has a world-class occupational pension system – but there are always opportunities for further innovation where this can benefit savers and businesses alike.

The Work and Pensions Select Committee recently published a report calling for the adoption of CDC schemes in the UK; the Government welcomed this report and is grateful to the Committee for their support and advice. It is important to be clear that CDC schemes are not a panacea, and that members could see their pension incomes fluctuate. However, as the Work and Pensions Select Committee so clearly recognised, a robustly designed and appropriately regulated CDC regime can offer positive outcomes for both employers and pension savers. The Royal Mail and the Communication Workers' Union are already working closely together to establish a CDC scheme, which the Government sees as an encouraging sign of the consensus in this area.

Saving for retirement is an extremely important part of people's financial planning, representing their hopes for the future. Throughout the last decade, the Government has therefore worked closely with the pensions, financial services and consumer community to strengthen the UK's pension savings culture. Together we have transformed the pensions landscape, delivering social change on an unprecedented scale. The establishment of CDC pension schemes is a key strand of this work.