

Daily Report

Tuesday, 4 June 2019

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 4 June 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:39 P.M., 04 June 2019). 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

■ **British Steel: Nationalisation**

Faisal Rashid:

[257820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to nationalise British Steel.

Andrew Stephenson:

Nationalisation would change the ownership of the plant, but not how it operates. It would require the Government to take on the company's outstanding financial obligations and may not provide the necessary legal security and protection for taxpayers' investment.

Once nationalised, in line with strict state aid rules for steel, the Government would have to act in the same way as any private owner, thinking principally of making a profit.

■ **Energy: Consumers**

Chris Ruane:

[256956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to promote awareness of Ofgem's priority services register.

Chris Skidmore:

Ofgem requires energy companies to promote and maintain a Priority Services Register (PSR), to provide non-financial help to certain groups of vulnerable consumers. Ofgem is responsible for ensuring compliance with these requirements.

In 2016, Ofgem introduced new requirements that companies take all reasonable steps to identify customers who may benefit from PSR services and introduced a broad "Vulnerability Principle" in 2017, which clarifies that suppliers need to make an extra effort to identify and respond to the needs of consumers in vulnerable situations, which can help identify those who could benefit from PSR services.

The number of consumers on PSRs has risen from 1.7 million electricity and 1.4 million gas consumers in 2010, to nearly 6 million electricity and 4.8 million gas consumers in 2017. Ofgem publish information on energy company performance, available online at:

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/system/files/docs/2018/11/vulnerability_report_2018.pdf

Ofgem is also working to promote PSR data sharing between energy and water companies in England and Wales (with the customer's consent) following a successful pilot in Spring 2018.

■ Iron and Steel: Scotland

Marion Fellows:

[\[257089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Scottish Government on the future of the Scottish steel industry.

Andrew Stephenson:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Ministers for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy frequently meet steel industry companies and we are working closely with the sector, the unions and devolved administrations to support the UK steel sector develop a long-term viable solution for the UK steel industry. The Scottish Government have also been invited to participate on each occasion Ministers have convened the Steel Council.

■ Motor Vehicles: Fuel Cells

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[257443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential economic merits of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government has plans to have high quality infrastructure to support economic growth and prosperity across all regions of the UK. The UK is well placed to be a global leader in hydrogen and fuel cell powered transportation due to our high-quality engineering and manufacturing capability in relevant supply chains. We will support the development of the infrastructure for hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles, recognising that the market is at an early stage of development. We are doing this through initiatives such as the £23m Hydrogen for Transport programme, which will increase the uptake of fuel cell electric vehicles and expand hydrogen refuelling infrastructure.

The Government set out its view on the relative environmental performance of different fuels in the Road to Zero Strategy. This was based on an independently verified assessment of the fuels and technologies available to consumers, with consideration given to both greenhouse gas and air-pollutant emissions over the period to 2050. This analysis suggests that hydrogen fuel cell technology could have a role in supporting the transition to zero emission transport alongside battery electric technology. In the long term, hydrogen may be more suited for use in HGVs and by fleets where range and fast refuelling are key concerns.

■ Natural Gas: Prices

Chris Ruane:

[\[256957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent comparative assessment he has made of the cost of gas to British consumers relative to the cost to consumers in each of the other member states of the EU.

Chris Skidmore:

The Department is committed to regular and transparent reporting on the price of gas for UK consumers and currently publishes a price comparison with EU member states on a bi-annual basis. The latest statistical reports from this series are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/international-domestic-energy-prices>

The UK has some of the lowest domestic gas prices in the EU. Average prices paid by consumers for the period January to June 2018 were the second lowest in the EU15 and were 31 per cent lower than the median average price.

Recent figures also show that gas prices for UK consumers has been consistently cheaper than the median average for all EU member states (EU28) since 2016 currently peaking at 15.5% cheaper in the first half of 2018.

These figures are for average domestic gas prices including taxes paid for by UK domestic consumers, with a consumption level of the EU's definition of a 'medium' amount of gas per annum (5,557 – 55,557 kWh).

■ Ofgem

Dr Alan Whitehead: [257383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to lay before the House the Strategy and Policy Statement relating to the functions of Ofgem following the consultation on the draft statement of August 2014.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [257384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish a response to the consultation on the draft Strategy and Policy Statement relating to the functions of Ofgem, published in August 2014.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [257385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance on the functions of Ofgem relating to climate and environment priorities he plans to include in the Strategy and Policy Statement relating to the functions of Ofgem, published in August 2014.

Chris Skidmore:

The Government will not be issuing a response to a consultation on the strategic priorities of a previous Government.

A Strategic Policy Statement is a discretionary policy tool, introduced under the Energy Act 2013, for use by my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

The Government has absolute confidence in Ofgem, as the independent GB energy market regulator, to carry out its statutory objectives and functions, to protect existing and future energy consumers, and to deliver a raft of policies focused on decarbonisation, ensuring security of supply and lowering costs for consumers.

■ Research Fund for Coal and Steel

Marion Fellows:

[\[257085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to maintain the same level of funding awarded under the Research Fund for Coal and Steel after the UK leaves the EU.

Marion Fellows:

[\[257087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will ring-fence for the steel sector the UK's €250 million share of the Research Fund for Coal and Steel returned due to the UK leaving the EU.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK Government is committed to ensuring that UK and EU researchers, universities and businesses in the steel sector will be able to continue to collaborate after the UK leaves the European Union.

The Government's priority remains ensuring the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) is ratified. This would ensure that UK entities' right to participate in the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS) would be unaffected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU until the end of 2020: the WA envisages that UK participants will be eligible to bid for RFCS funding until that date.

In the event the UK leaves the EU without an overall withdrawal agreement, the Government will guarantee the payment of awards for UK organisations which successfully bid directly to EU programmes, including RFCS, until the end of 2020, for the whole lifetime of projects agreed.

Beyond 2020, the UK government is considering options for supporting R&D in steel and will continue to work with the sector, unions and Devolved Administrations to develop a long-term viable solution for the UK steel industry.

The Government will decide on science and innovation expenditure, including on R&D for steel, in the next Spending Review. Science and innovation have been made a priority by the UK Government and is at the heart of the Department's Industrial Strategy, in recognition of the strong economic benefits of public investment in science and innovation and its capacity to leverage private investment.

■ Smoke and Chimney Gases: Heating

Dr David Drew:

[\[257639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his plan is for the removal of the Under investigation marker from Flue Gas Heat Recovery products in the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure product characteristic database.

Chris Skidmore:

The decision on the 'Under investigation' marker in the product characteristics database is currently being considered. Interested parties will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Cabinet Office: Departmental Responsibilities****Jon Trickett:**[\[257648\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish a list of the guidance and regulations that his Department has issued across Government that are active.

Mr David Lidington:

The guidance and regulations documents that have been issued and published by Cabinet Office can be found at GOV.UK.

■ Cabinet Office: Iron and Steel**Nick Smith:**[\[257731\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the proportion of UK steel and steel products procured by his Department in (a) 2017 and (b) 2018.

Oliver Dowden:

Cabinet Office did not directly procure any steel in this period for major projects.

■ Civil Servants: Mental Health**Chuka Umunna:**[\[256322\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what support is available to civil servants who suffer from mental health problems.

Oliver Dowden:

The Civil Service is committed to being a leading employer on mental health support and to the positive health and wellbeing of all our staff. This includes providing specific support to those who suffer with mental health problems. This approach enables employees experiencing mental ill health to remain in work or return to work following a period of absence and includes recommendations for workplace adjustments and signposting to other mental health services

The Civil Service has a network of an estimated 4,600 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA's) or equivalent who are equipped with the knowledge to recognise early symptoms and provide initial help to colleagues experiencing mental health concerns

All departments have access to Occupational Health Services, which provide support and advice to managers and employees in respect of mental ill health. The Civil Service also provides access for all employees to Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) or equivalent, for counselling and other mental health support

In addition, the Civil Service has improved its use of data to monitor and respond to mental health trends in the workplace, raised awareness and enhanced the range of workplace adjustments available to staff with poor mental health. It has invested in training for senior leaders and line managers to create a more supportive and preventative culture towards mental ill health in the workplace.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Stephen Pound:

[\[257636\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people did not meet the personal identification requirement to be eligible to vote in the most recent Voter ID pilot areas.

Kevin Foster:

Voter ID is part of a body of work this Government is delivering to strengthen the integrity of our electoral system and give the public confidence our elections are secure and fit for the 21st century.

In line with the 2018 pilot evaluation, validated figures will be published as part of both the Cabinet Office and the independent Electoral Commission's evaluations of the 2019 voter ID pilots in the summer. We will be looking carefully at the evaluations to help inform our next steps and shape how the final policy will look when it is introduced.

■ Electoral Register: EU Nationals

Catherine West:

[\[257793\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many EU citizens were registered to vote in the 2019 local elections.

Kevin Foster:

The Cabinet Office does not hold information on the numbers of European Union nationals resident in the UK who do or do not register to vote in local elections

Estimates of the number of eligible people on the registers for electoral events are published by the Electoral Commission following each poll, but have not previously included a breakdown of the numbers of EU citizens eligible to vote. These reports are available online at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Each Electoral Registration Officer maintains a register for their own local area. Some headline registration statistics by area are collated and published annually by the Office for National Statistics, however, this does not include a breakdown of the numbers of EU citizens registered to vote. The total number of UK local government electors – which includes EU citizens – in the year to December 2018 was 47.8 million.

The latest bulletin is available at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration.

■ EU Nationals: Registration

Catherine West: [\[257792\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to review the EC6/UC1 process for the registration of EU citizens resident in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

It is the Government's intention to leave the European Union with a deal as soon as possible and therefore not participate in any future European Parliamentary elections. There are no plans to review the EC6/UC1 process as it will no longer be required.

■ Government Departments: Consultants

Stephanie Peacock: [\[257803\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 6 February 2019 to Question 215097, what proportion of the £1,549 million total reported spend on consultancy services in 2017-18 was attributable to each Government Department.

Oliver Dowden:

All departmental spend over £25,000 is published on data.gov.uk

■ Meningitis

Jim Shannon: [\[256399\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have died from meningitis in the UK in each of the last five years.

Kevin Foster:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ256399.pdf]

■ Public Sector: Billing

Ronnie Cowan: [\[257777\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) fines and (b) penalty notices his Department issued to public sector bodies for not adhering to the prompt pay policy in 2018.

Oliver Dowden:

The Government recognises that the public sector should set a strong example by paying promptly. Under the prompt payment policy, public sector bodies are required to include 30-day payment terms in new public sector contracts; and this payment term must be passed down the supply chain. They are also required to publish annual payment performance data.

While there is no provision to issue fines or penalty notices to public sector bodies that do not adhere to the prompt payment policy, we encourage businesses to report

poor payment practice and instances of late payment in public sector contracts in breach of contract terms, to the Public Procurement Review Service, who will investigate. The service also undertakes its own proactive investigations into payment performance.

Following a public consultation, in November 2018 a new prompt payment initiative was announced to ensure all Government suppliers and subcontractors benefit from being paid on time. For the first time, failure of companies to demonstrate prompt payment to their suppliers could result in them being prevented from winning government contracts.

Coming into force in September 2019, this will ensure the Government only does business with companies who pay their suppliers on time, many of which are small businesses. The move will promote a healthy and diverse marketplace of companies providing public services

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces Covenant: Charities

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[257677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria her Department uses for making decisions on awarding money to charities through the Forces Covenant Fund.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund has £10 million per year to support Armed Forces communities and has four broad funding themes: removing barriers to family life; extra support after service for those that need help; measures to integrate military and civilian communities and allow the Armed Forces community to participate as citizens; non-core healthcare services for veterans.

The Fund is delivered by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, and Trustees decide on programme recommendations which are submitted to the cross-government Covenant Reference Group (CRG). Following approval by the CRG, these are delivered as priorities. Open and transparent criteria is published in the programme guidance documents and interested organisations apply in line with the published criteria. Applications are assessed, and expert advice may be sought where appropriate. Decisions on grants are made by the Trustees, and when funding is limited, grants are awarded to those applications which are based on a national portfolio perspective.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[257679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if she will publish a list of all charities that have received support through the Forces Covenant Fund.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

A list of all charities that have received support through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust is available on the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Website, published at: <https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/grants-weve-funded/>

Additionally, full reports of funding by year and annual summaries are published at: <https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/our-impact/>

■ Armed Forces' Pay Review Body: Publications**Nia Griffith:****[256980]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Armed Forces Pay Review Body's Forty-Eighth Report 2019 will be published.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Armed Forces' Pay Review Body have submitted their report. Her Majesty's Government is currently considering the recommendations before agreeing the final 2019 Armed Forces Pay Award, taking into account the need to recruit, retain, and motivate suitably able and qualified personnel, as well as the long term affordability of the Armed Forces. Once a decision has been reached, as with previous years, the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body report will be published.

■ Armed Forces: Pay**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[257143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions she has had with the Armed Forces Pay Review Body on levels of pay for the armed forces.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The Ministry of Defence has provided the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body with all its evidence to support their recommendations for Pay Round 2019-20. The Armed Forces' Pay Review Body have submitted their report and Her Majesty's Government is currently considering the recommendations before agreeing the final 2019 Armed Forces Pay Award.

■ Armed Forces: Prosecutions**Nia Griffith:****[257032]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Written Statement of 21 May 2019, Official Report HCWS1575 on Legal Protections and Support for Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans, when the public consultation on legal protections will (a) open and (b) close.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Ministry of Defence will launch a public consultation in summer 2019 on legislation to protect veterans who may be subject to repeated investigations in relation to overseas operations many years after the events in question.

This is a personal priority for me and I hope that we can bring forward legislation as soon as possible.

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

Stephen Crabb:

[\[257482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 April 2019 to Question 239921 on Armed Forces: Recruitment, when he plans to write to the hon. Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire with the information on the number of recruitment applications declined on medical grounds.

Mark Lancaster:

I apologise to the hon. Member for the time taken to respond to his Question 239921.

The table below shows how many recruitment applications for the Regular Armed Forces were declined after being classified Permanently Medically Unfit in the last five financial years.

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
14,729	16,937	20,573	22,516	23,043

These figures are single service estimates and are not official statistics produced by Defence Statistics.

Although the medical rejection figures have risen each year, the amount of applications over the five-year period has also increased significantly.

Attachments:

1. Armed Forces Recruitment [Hansard Extract UIN 239921.docx]

Stephen Crabb:

[\[257486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the medical conditions that trigger automatic rejection for recruitment applications to the armed forces.

Mark Lancaster:

Medical conditions that are an absolute bar to Service entry are set-out in the Joint Service Manual of Medical Fitness (JSMMF). A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

The JSMMF is updated periodically. The next version will be published in June and placed in the Library of the House.

Attachments:

1. Joint Service Manual of Medical Fitness [20180924-JSP_950_Part_1_Lft_6-7-7_(V1.4 Sep 18)-O.pdf]

■ Army: Recruitment

Mr Mark Francois: [\[257021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many recruits were enlisted into the regular army in financial year 2018-19.

Mark Lancaster:

The total number of personnel enlisted and commissioned, in the case of Officers, into the regular Army in 2018-19 was 6,985. Of this 6,315 were soldiers and 640 officers. In addition, a further 400 Gurkhas were enlisted into the Brigade of Gurkhas.

■ France: Military Decorations

Emily Thornberry: [\[256308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 May 2019 to Question 250007 on France: Military Decorations, how many surviving British veterans who fought for the liberation of France during the Second World War are waiting to receive the award of the Legion d'Honneur for which they have been certified as eligible by his Department; whether he expects those individuals to receive their honours on or before 6 June 2019; and if he will publish a breakdown of those individuals by their (a) age and (b) current place of residence.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

There are currently 71 cases for the award being processed by the French authorities, with a further 17 currently with the Ministry of Defence. It is not possible to estimate how many recipients will receive their award by 6 June 2019, as the French authorities are responsible for the distribution of their medal. However, priority is given to those particularly elderly or in poor health.

■ Satellite Communications: Costs

Martin Whitfield: [\[257806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the estimated cost is of SKYNET 6.

Stuart Andrew:

The estimated costs for the entire programme, out to the 2040s, is £7 billion.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[257090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many alleged violations of international humanitarian law have been investigated by the Joint Incidents Assessment Team; and how many of those investigations have resulted in blame being apportioned to (a) Saudi Arabia and (b) Houthi rebels.

Mark Lancaster:

The Joint Incident Assessment Team has published 136 statements regarding its investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law. The reports do not attribute blame.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 5G: Hampshire****Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**[\[257057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) development and (b) use of 5G technology in Hampshire.

Margot James:

The Government is committed to becoming a world leader in 5G, and for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027. Following the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review which sets out the Government's national, long-term strategy for delivering world leading telecoms infrastructure across the UK, the Government is working to create the right conditions for the deployment of 5G.

We are investing in a nationally coordinated programme of 5G testbed facilities and application trials. Government has so far allocated £200 million from the National Productivity Investment Fund to the 5G programme to help establish new business models and revenue streams.

It is important to note that the vast majority of commercial rollout of 5G services will be delivered by industry, with services launching in the UK later this year. Hampshire has specifically had Vodafone commit to launching its 5G network by the end of the year in Southampton and Portsmouth, meaning that the county will be one of the first places in the UK with commercially viable 5G networks.

■ Culture**Kevin Brennan:**[\[256962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the publication of the Government's soft power strategy.

Jeremy Wright:

I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues including the soft power strategy. We have been consulting widely across our sectors to ensure the strategy reflects the breadth of our soft power assets.

■ Museums and Galleries: Marketing**Kevin Brennan:**[\[256963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support he will provide to museums to help promote UK soft power internationally after the UK leaves the EU.

Jeremy Wright:

We will continue to support the work of UK museums and their international counterparts in promoting the free exchange of ideas, knowledge and an

understanding of the world around us. It is important that we continue to support the museums, whilst also enhancing their ability to undertake further international trade and build related partnerships through their collections and commercial endeavours. The Government continues to be committed to providing free entry to the permanent collections of the national museums, ensuring that they can be enjoyed by visitors from at home and around the world.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices

Julian Knight: [216336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeship starts there were in (a) England and Wales and (b) Solihull constituency in each academic year since 2015.

Anne Milton:

The department collects apprenticeships data for England.

The attached table shows the number of apprenticeship starts in the Solihull parliamentary constituency and in England since the 2014-15 academic year.

These figures are published in our apprenticeships geography data tool:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>.

Attachments:

1. 216336_Solihull_and_England_apprenticeship_starts [216336 table attachment - apprenticeship starts reported to date in Solihull and England from 2014-15 to 2018-19.doc]

■ Arts: Curriculum

Mr Laurence Robertson: [256913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his policy is on the inclusion of music, dance and theatre in the school curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

The Department strongly believes that the arts form an important part of a broad and balanced National Curriculum, which is why art & design, dance, drama and music are compulsory for pupils aged 5-14 in state-maintained schools. The arts contribute significantly towards our economy and can transform lives and introduce young people to a huge range of opportunities. As a result, the Department is providing nearly £500 million of funding between 2016 and 2020 for a diverse portfolio of arts and music education programmes. £300 million of this funding is ring-fenced to support music education. The Department funds other music, dance and drama programmes as well, and also provides opportunities for young people to attend Saturday Arts Clubs and visit museums.

■ Children in Care

Angela Rayner:

[257079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of children in unregistered children's homes in each year since 2010.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Information on the placements of children looked-after is collected annually and published in the statistical release "Children looked after in England (including adoptions): 2017 to 2018". The latest release is available on the department's statistical web page at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018>. Previous releases can be located here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>.

Any child specifically placed in unregistered provision could be reported across a number of placement categories, but not exclusively in any, so we can not estimate the number of children placed within unregistered homes.

Unregulated accommodation can be the right option for some older children in care and care leavers aged 16 or 17, providing a stepping-stone towards moving into an independent tenancy.

However, I want a better understanding of the use of this type of provision and have commissioned a piece of research to understand the issues related to the use of unregistered and unregulated provision. Sir Alan Wood, in his role as chair of the Residential Care Leadership Board, will oversee this work, which will develop our understanding of the reasons for local authorities placing children in these settings and their quality. I visited some unregulated provision on 23 May to further my knowledge of this type of accommodation.

In May, I wrote to all Directors of Children's Services asking them to ensure that the accommodation they use is suitable; and to ensure that young people are getting the support they need.

I take providing appropriate support to young people in care and leaving care very seriously. That is why the government is funding local authorities to implement 'Staying Put', which allows care leavers to stay with their foster carer up to the age of 21, and piloting 'Staying Closer' in 8 local authorities, which provides an enhanced support offer for young people leaving residential care.

■ English Baccalaureate

Helen Hayes:

[257045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to ensure that grades awarded for EBaccs are comparable across all subjects.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). I have asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write directly to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ **Higher Education: Finance****Seema Malhotra:**[\[257746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Philip Augar report on funding and post-18 education is planned for publication.

Chris Skidmore:

The independent panel, chaired by Philip Augar, has published its independent advice to the government. The government will consider the panel's recommendations carefully and will conclude the review at the spending review. The government has not yet taken decisions with regards to the recommendations put forward. The full report can be accessed via GOV.UK, and as a command paper here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf.

■ **Languages: GCSE****Helen Hayes:**[\[257044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the difficulty in obtaining top grades in exams on the number of students choosing to study a foreign language at GCSE.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is aware that many factors can influence a student's decision to study languages at GCSE level. As the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessment in England, Ofqual takes claims of grading severity in modern foreign languages (MFL) seriously. Ofqual is currently conducting a comprehensive review of grading standards in GCSE French, German and Spanish to see if there is a compelling case for an adjustment to grading standards in these subjects. Ofqual's review will consider statistical evidence, contextual data including trends in the numbers taking these subjects, and the quality of students' work through looking at how GCSE grades relate to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Ofqual is also gathering the views of subject experts and other stakeholders and is due to report on this work in autumn 2019.

The Department wants to see more pupils taking a language GCSE. We are supporting schools to increase the number of pupils taking GCSEs in languages through several programmes including, the £4.8 million MFL pedagogy programme, an undergraduate digi-mentoring scheme, the £10 million Mandarin Excellence Programme, and targeted communications activity at key points in the school year to challenge misconceptions about studying languages.

■ Pupil Premium: Culture

Mike Kane:

[\[230810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupil premium funding is spent by schools on artistic and cultural activities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The pupil premium is additional funding that schools are allocated to help improve the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils - those who have been in receipt of benefits-based free school meals at any point in the last 6 years, are currently looked-after or who have left care through adoption or other specified routes.

Schools have flexibility over how they spend the pupil premium, as they are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of their disadvantaged pupils. The department does not routinely collect information from schools about their expenditure of pupil premium funding on particular activities.

■ Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: Finance

Gordon Marsden:

[\[256937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason Government funding was withdrawn for the Quality Assurance Agency's regulatory and Quality Assurance licensing of Access Validating Agency's for the new academic year 2019-20.

Chris Skidmore:

Under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, the Office for Students cannot pay the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to regulate or quality assure Access Validating Agency's or Access to Higher Education Courses beyond 31 July 2019.

The department has spoken with the QAA to discuss how it is adapting to the conclusion of these historic contracts and will hold further discussions later in the year.

■ Schools: Artificial Intelligence

Mr David Davis:

[\[257439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefit of Artificial Intelligence in the classroom.

Nick Gibb:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a complex, emerging area. The Department has seen some outstanding examples of AI and machine learning being used within schools and colleges in England to support teachers to deliver curriculum content as well as to automate burdensome non-teaching tasks such as marking.

However, the impact of these technologies in the classroom still remains largely unevidenced. We have set up a new AI Horizon Scanning group, so that policy,

digital and delivery teams within the Department can explore how AI may impact our policies, as well as the benefits it can bring to the education system.

The Department also regularly engages with those at the cutting edge of these technologies. For example, the Department is a member of the new Institute for Ethical AI & Machine Learning.

■ **Students: Loans**

Stephen Lloyd: [257734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether non-UK EU students starting courses in September 2019 will be eligible for student loans.

Chris Skidmore:

As announced in July 2018, EU nationals who start a course in England in the 2019/20 academic year or before will continue to be eligible for 'home fee' status and student finance support from Student Finance England for the duration of their course, provided they meet the residency requirement. On 28 May 2019, at the EU Competitiveness Council, it was also announced that EU nationals who will start a course in England in the 2020/21 academic year will also continue to be eligible for 'home fee' status with student finance support for the duration of their course.

■ **Teachers: Pensions**

Stephen Lloyd: [257732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how long the transitional relief will last under the forthcoming increase in employer's contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme; and whether that relief will apply to all institutions that employ staff in that scheme.

Stephen Lloyd: [257733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment on the effect of the increase to the employer's contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme on the quality of education provided by Higher Education Institutions after the transitional protection has passed.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recently published its response to the public consultation on increases to teachers' pensions employer contributions. All representations made by stakeholders have been considered, alongside all evidence relevant to the issues involved. The Department has decided to maintain its original proposal, to fund schools which receive public funding and Further Education providers for 2019-20, and not to fund Higher Education Institutions or Independent Schools. Funding beyond 2019-20 is a matter for the upcoming Spending Review.

The full response can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/funding-increases-to-teachers-pensions-employer-contributions>.

In addition, it is worth noting that all registered Higher Education providers are required to meet the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which sets a high baseline for quality and standards.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution

Paul Farrelly:

[256945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to (a) ensure that ambient air pollution is treated as an occupational health issue and (b) adopt a workplace exposure limit for diesel engine exhaust emissions.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The Government has published a [Clean Air Strategy](#) that sets out actions to meet our statutory obligations to reduce emissions of the main pollutants by 2020 and 2030. In the Strategy we committed to working with health professionals to develop a better understanding and awareness of health impacts, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). We have also published updated [appraisal tools](#) and accompanying guidance to enable the health impacts of air pollution to be considered in every relevant policy decision that is made.

HSE is the regulator for work related health and safety in Great Britain; it does not regulate environmental exposures. HSE has no plans to treat ambient air pollution as an occupational health issue. Exposures to substances that are hazardous to health caused by a work activity, including airborne contaminants, are already covered by a robust regulatory framework that includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002.

A recent amendment to the EU Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive has introduced a binding occupational exposure limit value for diesel engine exhaust emissions (DEEEs). Member States have until 21 February 2023 to implement the limit, unless the activity is underground mining or tunnel construction in which case the date for implementation is 21 February 2026. In the UK, binding and other occupational exposure limit values are implemented as Workplace Exposure Limits (WELs). WELs already exist for some substances which are also components of DEEEs such as nitrogen monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide.

Paul Farrelly:

[256946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK adopts the World Health Organisation's exposure limits for the main pollutants.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We have published a Clean Air Strategy that sets out actions to meet our statutory obligations to reduce emissions of the main pollutants by 2020 and 2030. In addition we committed to a new long-term target to reduce population exposure to PM_{2.5} and

to publishing evidence on the achievability of meeting the World Health Organisation guidelines.

■ **Air Pollution: Monitoring**

Paul Farrelly: [\[256944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to improve the consistency of pollution monitoring throughout the UK.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

In England, the Environment Agency uses consistent methods as part of an agreed strategy to monitor pollution affecting air, land and water. Reviews are being conducted of air and water quality programmes, to improve consistency where it is required and provide the evidence needed to support environmental improvements.

■ **Animal Welfare Act 2006**

Mr Gavin Shuker: [\[256989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to provide local authorities with the resources to enforce the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

David Rutley:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Bridgend, Madeleine Moon, on 22 May 2019, PQ 256270.

■ **Bees: Conservation**

Paul Farrelly: [\[256942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the report entitled, Bees under siege from habitat loss, climate change and pesticides, published by the World Wildlife Fund and Buglife in May 2019, what steps he is taking to (a) stabilise and (b) reverse the decline in bee populations.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The report referred to is based on the authors' analysis in the East of England. The government has not assessed the report.

We are taking action to address these pressures through the National Pollinator Strategy and wider nature policy and I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Slough, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, on 7 March 2019 to PQ 228062.

■ **Falkland Islands: Environment Protection**

Hilary Benn: [\[256922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to continue to fund environmental (a) research and (b) policy-making on the Falkland Islands after the UK leaves the EU.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Funding for environment projects for British Overseas Territories after we leave the EU will be assessed as part of the forthcoming Spending Review. As announced in the Chancellor's Spring Statement package on 13 March, the Government has published a call for evidence which invites ideas on how the British Overseas Territories' biodiversity can be safeguarded:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/safeguarding-the-environment-in-british-overseas-territories-call-for-evidence/call-for-evidence-document>

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Bougainville: Referendums****Helen Goodman:****[256984]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has plans to send election observers to monitor the forthcoming Bougainvillean independence referendum in October 2019.

Mark Field:

The British Government is fully committed to supporting the Bougainville Peace Process, including the forthcoming referendum. We are contributing £95,000 to the UN's Bougainville Referendum Support Project, and have shared our expertise on post-conflict reconciliation, including from Northern Ireland. We have yet to receive an invitation to deploy election observers but stand ready to help ensure a free, fair and peaceful vote.

■ North Korea: Human Trafficking**Fiona Bruce:****[256975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will take steps to respond to the atrocities detailed in the report of 20 May 2019 presented to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for North Korea by the Korea Future Initiative entitled Sex Slaves, The Prostitution, Cybersex and Forced Marriage of North Korean Women and Girls in China.

Mark Field:

We are grateful to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for North Korea for its ongoing work to highlight the grave human rights situation in North Korea. The Korea Future Initiative's new report presents a stark and worsening picture of the plight of North Korean women and girls in China. We are deeply concerned at its accounts of women and girls being trafficked from North Korea to China for prostitution and forced marriage, and the misery and suffering they endure.

We will continue to raise with China our concerns over the repatriation of North Korean refugees, which we believe puts them at serious risk of exploitation. We continue to emphasise to China that those fleeing North Korea should be treated as

legitimate asylum claimants. The UK is at the forefront of raising global awareness of modern slavery and sexual violence. As such, we will consider the best way to address the issues in the report including raising these with the appropriate Chinese and North Korean authorities.

■ **Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018**

Mr Jonathan Djanogly:

[\[256947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he plans to publish the annual report required under section 32 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018.

Sir Alan Duncan:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) intends to lay the annual report required under section 32 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 ("the Sanctions Act") soon. Section 32 requires that the report be laid before Parliament "as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting period." The current reporting period, also referred to as "the first reporting period" in the Sanctions Act, is from 23 May 2018 to 22 May 2019. As such, the FCO is required to lay the report as soon as reasonably practicable after 22 May.

Mr Jonathan Djanogly:

[\[256948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many individuals are subject to the annual report required under section 32 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018; and what the nationality is of such individual.

Sir Alan Duncan:

During the reporting period from 23 May 2018 to 22 May 2019, the government laid 17 regulations under section 1 of the Sanctions Act, including seven regulations with a stated human rights purpose. The government prioritised preparation for sanctions implementation in case of a no deal exit. Specifically, the government prioritised making the necessary secondary legislation to carry over existing EU sanctions into UK law by exit day. In doing so, the government's objective was to ensure that, should the UK have left the European Union without a deal by that date, there would have been no gap in implementing the sanctions regimes which are currently in place in the UK by reason of EU law.

As the UK has not exited the EU, no designations under the 17 regulations laid during the reporting period have been necessary, as listings under EU sanctions regimes still apply by virtue of EU law. As such, no individuals have been sanctioned under the Sanctions Act.

■ **Sri Lanka: Terrorism**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[257499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Sri Lankan counterpart on protection for the Muslim community from retaliatory attacks in that country; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Field:

The Government has made a number of representations to the Sri Lankan authorities regarding the protection of the Muslim community and other minorities in Sri Lanka. In the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks we urged the Sri Lankan government, faith and community leaders to lead an inclusive response to the attacks that brought different communities and faith groups together, and ensured the protection of minorities.

The Minister of State for Security and Economic Crime, Ben Wallace, visited Sri Lanka on 2-3 May and met with President Sirisena, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and a number of faith leaders to underline this message. Lord Ahmad and I have raised the issue of protection for minority groups with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner, and our High Commission in Colombo has continued to raise concerns with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, including following the outbreaks of violence against Muslim communities on 13 May.

I addressed the House on this matter on 14 May, and our High Commission also joined an EU statement on 16 May calling on political, religious and other community leaders to make every effort to promote understanding and harmony between communities.

■ Vietnam: Freedom of Expression and Prisoners**Helen Goodman:**[\[256985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Vietnamese counterpart on the (a) number of prisoners of conscience and (b) freedom of expression in that country.

Mark Field:

The UK is concerned at restrictions on freedom of expression in Vietnam. We have regularly raised these issues at the United Nations and bilaterally with the Government of Vietnam.

We raised concerns about freedom of expression and assembly, the treatment of prisoners and the protection of civil society in Vietnam during Vietnam's Universal Periodic Review in January 2019, and again in a UN Human Rights Council Item 2 Statement in March 2019.

Bilaterally, I raised freedom of expression at the UK-Vietnam High Level Political Dialogue in January 2019. Ahead of the Media Freedom Conference in July 2019, the UK will continue to raise media freedom with the Vietnamese government.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Community Health Partnerships: Expenditure**

Jonathan Ashworth: [257134]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the table headed Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) expenditure on page 138 of the Central Government Supply Estimates 2019-20: Main Supply Estimates, published in May 2019, if he will publish a breakdown of spending under the heading I: Community Health Partnerships.

Jonathan Ashworth: [257135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the table headed Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) expenditure on page 138 of the Central Government Supply Estimates 2019-20: Main Supply Estimates, published in May 2019, if he will publish a breakdown of spending under the heading I: Genomics England Limited.

Jonathan Ashworth: [257136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the table headed Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) expenditure on page 138 of the Central Government Supply Estimates 2019-20: Main Supply Estimates, published in May 2019, if he will publish a breakdown of spending under the heading I: Health and Care Professions Council.

Jonathan Ashworth: [257137]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the table headed Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) expenditure on page 138 of the Central Government Supply Estimates 2019-20: Main Supply Estimates, published in May 2019, if he will publish a breakdown of spending under the heading I: NHS Property Services.

Stephen Hammond:

The figures contained within page 138 of the Central Government Supply Estimates 2019-20 show details of the planned resource, capital and cash budget for each arm's-length body within the Department, available at the time of production.

Details of each departmental body's spending plans will be published in their individual business plan.

The Department prepares a Memorandum which is published by the Health and Social Care Committee, this provides further information on the Main Estimates publication. The Memorandum is prepared in accordance with the guidance issued by Parliamentary Scrutiny Unit and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/scrutinyunit/reports-and-publications/main-estimates-2019-20/>

■ Dental Services: Standards

Diana Johnson:

[257007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he last made an assessment of the effectiveness of key performance indicators for NHS dental practices.

Seema Kennedy:

NHS England is responsible for the commissioning of dental services and performance management of contracts held. NHS England looks at and update key dental performance indicators as a continuous improvement process. They are prepared by the NHS Business Services Agency and have a formal review annually. The indicators are shared with National Health Service dental providers to assist them in delivering a high quality service to patients. Examples of the information provided can be found on the NHS Business Services Agency website at the following link:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/dental-data>

Diana Johnson:

[257031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department measures public satisfaction with NHS dental care.

Seema Kennedy:

The Department measures public satisfaction of National Health Service dental services through National Health Service Outcomes Framework. The NHS Outcomes Framework is also used to monitor the health outcomes of adults and children in England. For NHS dentistry this is captured through 4.4.iii Access to NHS dental services. The indicator uses data collected in the GP Patient Survey to ask whether patients were successful in getting an NHS dental appointment if they tried in the last two years.

Latest data shows that of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last two years, 85.2% of respondents rated their NHS dental experience as positive.

■ General Practitioners

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[256914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to tackle falling numbers of GPs in England.

Seema Kennedy:

The NHS Long Term Plan made a clear commitment to the future of general practice, with primary and community care set to receive at least £4.5 billion more in real terms a year by 2023/24. Spend on these services will grow faster than the rising National Health Service budget. Since the launch of the NHS Long Term Plan, NHS England and the British Medical Association's General Practitioners (GP) Committee have agreed a five-year GP (General Medical Services) contract framework from 2019/20.

The new contract framework will be essential to deliver the ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan through strong general practice services. The contract confirmed that NHS England will now extend a number of general practice programmes until 2023/24 to help deliver against the commitment to 5,000 additional doctors in general practice.

NHS England and Health Education England (HEE) are working together with the profession to increase the GP workforce. This includes measures to boost recruitment, address the reasons why GPs are leaving the profession, and encourage GPs to return to practice.

Further plans to support delivery will be set out in the final NHS workforce implementation plan due to be published later this year.

■ General Practitioners: Standards

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[256915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of standard 10-minute appointments with GPs.

Seema Kennedy:

No specific work has been done centrally to assess the effectiveness of the standard 10 minute consultation. However, there is no contractual obligation regarding the length of appointments in general practice.

■ Health Services: Autism and Learning Disability

Chris Ruane:

[\[256961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Written Statement of 21 May 2019, Care Quality Commission Thematic Review of Restrictive Practices, Seclusion and Segregation, HCWS 1569, what additional resources his Department plans to allocate to scrutinise cases of exclusion and long term segregation; and what assessment he has made of the timeframe required to review each such case.

Caroline Dinéage:

On 21 May 2019, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published its 'Interim Report: Review of restraint, prolonged seclusion and segregation for people with a mental health problem, a learning disability and or autism.' The Government has accepted all five of the recommendations in the CQC's interim report including the recommendation that over the next 12 months, there should be an independent and an in-depth review of the care provided to, and the discharge plan for, each person who is in segregation on a ward for children and young people or on a ward for people with a learning disability and/or autism.

The Department is committed to working with partners across the health, education and care system to ensure that all of the recommendations are implemented effectively.

We will ensure the care of each and every person detained in seclusion or long term segregation is thoroughly scrutinised. The timeframe required to review each case will be case-specific but each review will be conducted efficiently. We are working with the CQC, NHS England and other partner organisations on the arrangements for the reviews and their oversight and will publish further details shortly.

■ Sickle Cell Diseases: Health Services

Diana Johnson:

[\[256972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timescale is for (a) implementing and (b) completing NHS England's planned restructuring of haemoglobinopathy services; and if he will make a statement.

Diana Johnson:

[\[256973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of NHS England's planned restructuring of haemoglobinopathy services on (a) equitable access to services, (b) access to the most effective treatments, (c) access to highly specialised care and (d) quality of care in community-based settings for patients with sickle cell disease.

Diana Johnson:

[\[256974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish impact assessments of the potential effects of NHS England's planned restructuring of haemoglobinopathy services on treatment of (a) all haemoglobinopathies and (b) sickle cell disease.

Diana Johnson:

[\[257011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the latest Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity data published in NHS Digital's Hospital Episode Statistics data series, if he will publish the admissions data on sickle cell disorders (D57) for each (a) NHS England region and (b) Indices of Multiple Deprivation decile.

Seema Kennedy:

It is anticipated that NHS England's new model for specialised haemoglobinopathy services will be in place by early 2020. The new model is designed to improve access to specialist advice and care for patients, irrespective of where they live.

As part of the new service, NHS England is establishing a National Haemoglobinopathy Panel to provide national multidisciplinary oversight. Patients with complex needs, wherever they live, will be able to be referred to the Panel for expert advice on new treatments and approaches to care. The national service specification will also include guidance for the 13 new born bloodspot screening programme laboratories to refer infants found to be positive for sickle cell disease to the 10 new specialised haemoglobinopathy teams. Whilst NHS England commissions the specialised aspect of haemoglobinopathy care, haemoglobinopathy coordinating centres will be encouraged to link with and support community-based services

provided through primary care or community teams based within haemoglobinopathy teams.

The service specifications for the new specialised haemoglobinopathy teams and the haemoglobinopathy coordinating centres are due to be established in the next month and the associated impact assessment will be published as part of the suite of documents. The equality impact assessment indicates that it will advance the promotion of equality and support the reduction of health inequalities. For example, patients with thalassemia and sickle cell conditions will have equitable access to high quality specialist care and support within specialised commissioned centres irrespective of where in the country they live.

Hospital Episode Statistics data is attached, showing finished admission episodes with a primary and a primary or secondary diagnosis of sickle cell disorders by NHS England region of residence and Index of Multiple Deprivation decile in the year 2017-18.

Attachments:

1. FAE sickle cell NHS England table [Data Table for Combined Diana Johnson PQs (257011) formatted.xlsx]

■ Sickle Cell Diseases: Screening

Diana Johnson:

[257009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2016 to Question 45638, on sickle cell disease screen positive babies, if he will publish the data for (a) England, (b) each Public Health England sub-region and (c) each antenatal screening provider for each year since 2009-10.

Seema Kennedy:

Data on the number of sickle cell disease (SCD) babies born in England from 2010/11 are available to view here at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sickle-cell-and-thalassaemia-screening-data-trends-and-performance-analysis>

Data prior to 2010/11 is available regionally in the National Health Service Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Screening Programme archived reports at the following link:

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20150528151022/http://sct.screening.nhs.uk/data-reports>

From 2015/16 data is published by four regions and is reflected in the attached table.

Data on the number of SCD babies born in England is publicly available. However, data for 2017/18 is not yet available but is due to be published at the end of 2019. Data for each antenatal screening provider is not available.

Attachments:

1. Number of babies with sickle cell 2009-17 [PQ257009 table formatted.docx]

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Applications

Kate Green:

[R] [\[255321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many further submissions relating to asylum applications were submitted in each year since 2014.

Caroline Nokes:

Home Office records report that, between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018, a total of 28,953 people lodged Further Submissions after initially having their asylum claim refused.

A breakdown for each year is provided in the table below.

Since March 2015, the Home Office has required non-detained refused asylum seekers to lodge Further Submissions by appointment at the Further Submissions Unit based in Liverpool. The figures in the table note how many people lodged a Further Submission at the Further Submissions Unit, and how many people lodged their submission by a different route, including cases where a Further Submission was raised in detention and cases where a Further Submission is raised during the Family Returns Process.

Table showing breakdown of people who made Further Submissions following refusal of asylum between 2014 and 2018.

YEAR	SUBMISSION NOT MADE IN PERSON IN LIVERPOOL	SUBMISSION MADE IN PERSON AT FURTHER SUBMISSIONS UNIT IN LIVERPOOL	(TOTAL)
2014	-	-	4,521
2015	1,971	2,124	4,095
2016	1,420	3,324	4,744
2017	1,546	5,053	6,599
2018	1,618	7,376	8,994
(Total)	6,555	17,877	28,953

Kate Green:

[R] [\[255322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many further submissions relating to asylum applications were accepted as fresh claims in each year in 2014.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office publish data on the number of fresh claims in table as_01 (asylum, volume 1) of the quarterly Immigration Statistics -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release> publication. The latest release covering the year ending December 2018 can be found <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2018>

The figures are also provided below from the latest publication for ease of reference. Please note these totals are not a subset of the information included in response to UIN 255321.

YEAR	FRESH CLAIMS
2014	552
2015	307
2016	300
2017	214
2018	237

Home Office statisticians have identified some data issues with the published time series on fresh claims, which suggest the figures are undercounting the total number of fresh claims. Work is ongoing to better understand the nature of these issues. As a result it is likely the data will be revised once the issues are resolved.

Kate Green:

[R] [255323]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times has the requirement to submit further submissions in relation to an asylum application in person been waived in each year since 2014.

Caroline Nokes:

Our records indicate that a total of 1,677 postal further submissions have been made as a result of the Further Submissions in Person policy being waived (since the introduction of the policy in March 2015). A yearly breakdown of these is provided in table 1 below.

Table 1 - Postal further submissions by year
 Year Number of postal submissions
 2015 217 2016 306 2017 396 2018 758 (Total) 1,677
 Notes 1. These statistics have been taken from a live operational database. As such, numbers may change as information on that system is updated

2. Data extracted on 19/05/2019 3. Data relates to main applicants who lodged a postal further submission to Liverpool, between 30/03/2015 and 31/12/2018, who had previously applied for asylum

4. The further submissions in person policy was implemented in Liverpool on 30/03/2015

5. Postal further submissions are lodged when the requirement to lodge in person has been waived

6. The latest reportable period in line with published immigration statistics is 31/12/2018.

■ **Biometrics: Applications**

John Spellar:

[\[257442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to her Answer of 15 January 2019 to Question 205821 on Biometrics: Applications, whether Sopra Steria are meeting her Department's service standards.

Caroline Nokes:

Sopra Steria Limited (SSL) run the UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UK VCAS) centres on behalf of UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI). The UKVCAS service points bring together identity checks, evidence digitisation and biometric enrolment but SSL and we regularly monitor SSL's performance against a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

However SSL's performance against these KPIs are commercially sensitive and therefore we are unable to disclose this information.

Meg Hillier:

[\[257699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason his Department does not retain data on delays in the issue of Biometric Resident Permits.

Caroline Nokes:

Whilst the Home Office does not keep overall data relating to delays in the issuing of Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), it does closely monitor the service level agreements (SLAs) with partners relating to the successful production and delivery of BRPs. The Home Office is also able, on a case by case basis, to check whether and how quickly a BRP was produced and delivered.

Where the Home Office is made aware of a problem with BRP production, collection or delivery, the department aims to respond within 5 working days. Production problems are also closely monitored within the department and resolved urgently in order that an applicant receives their BRP within 10 working days of their decision being made.

In relation to BRP production the DVLA, who produce the BRPs, have an SLA to personalise 90% of BRPs within one working day of receipt and the remaining 10% within two working days of receipt.

The delivery partner, DX, is required to collect BRPs from the DVLA daily, excluding weekends and bank holidays, and then attempt first delivery within 48 hours of receipt (working days only) in 99% of cases.

DVLA and DX both met these SLAs for 2018/19 and continue to do so.

■ Biometrics: Edinburgh

Ian Murray: [257012]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 May 2019 to Question 251272 on Biometrics: Edinburgh, what criteria his Department used to assess the quality of the market research referred to in Sopra Steria Ltd's submission in the absence of that company's market research.

Caroline Nokes:

The bid criteria is commercially sensitive and therefore not published, however all bids were evaluated against a set criteria and as such the solution that Sopra Steria Ltd proposed was evaluated as per the other bidders against the statement of requirements and evaluation criteria.

Ian Murray: [257014]

To ask the Secretary of State for his Department, how many biometric enrolment applications have been received each year by the Home Office from Edinburgh addresses in each of the last three years.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on the number of applications for Biometric enrolment received from specific addresses is not collated centrally as part of the production of the quarterly Immigration Statistics. Biometric enrolment is a key requirement for the majority of visa application types.

The nearest available published information relates to total in-country migration transparency data on applications, latest edition at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/in-country-migration-data-february-2019>

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Ethnic Groups

Karen Lee: [257815]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to increase ethnic diversity in the fire and rescue service.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Diversity in fire and rescue services is not an optional extra and Government has been active in driving reform in this vital area.

As well as publishing workforce diversity data, we have established a new inspection regime which is shining a light on local fire and rescue services. In August 2018 the Home Office launched a national campaign to highlight fire and rescue as a career for underrepresented groups, working with sector leaders who are ultimately responsible for recruitment.

■ High Rise Flats: Fires

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[256916]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that firefighters have adequate resources to fight fires in high-rise tower blocks.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[256917]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment his Department has made of the readiness of fire departments in England and Wales to tackle fires similar to the fire in Grenfell Tower.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework to have in place and maintain an Integrated Risk Management Plan, which is developed in consultation with local communities. A fire and rescue authority will evaluate where fire and rescue related risk is greatest and determine its priorities in relation to prevention, protection and response accordingly.

In addition, each fire and rescue authority has a statutory requirement to have mutual assistance arrangements in place to provide additional support including during major fires and other emergencies, and to review and test their arrangements.

Local mutual assistance arrangements are augmented by national resilience capabilities available from across the country.

■ Immigration: Equality

Stephen Morgan:

[257047]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the equity of the application process for indefinite leave to remain.

Caroline Nokes:

Indefinite leave to remain is a type of leave which can be granted as a result of several application types. We consider the majority of straightforward applications within six months, however where an application is defined as non-straightforward due to complexity, the customer will be written to within the normal processing time to explain why it will not be decided within the normal standard, and to explain what will happen next.

It is open to applicants to obtain legal representation from a qualified UK immigration adviser. In the UK, the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) regulates immigration advisers. The OISC website www.gov.uk/find-an-immigration-adviser provides a list of immigration advisers.

■ Refugees: Bangladesh

Imran Hussain: [257048]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugees from the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh have made an application to enter the UK since August 2017.

Imran Hussain: [257049]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugees from the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh have entered the UK since August 2017.

Caroline Nokes:

The information requested is not published.

The Government of Bangladesh does not currently permit refugees living in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar to leave the camps either for the purpose of making a visa application or to leave Bangladesh to travel to a third country.

The Government has raised this issue of exit permits with the Government of Bangladesh, but the Government of Bangladesh position remains unchanged.

■ Visas: Applications

Meg Hillier: [257700]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of UK settlement visa applicants that paid for the priority service received a response within his Department's deadline.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on in country premium service applications for settlement visas and processing performance against service standards is published in the Migration Transparency data, table InC07, latest edition at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/in-country-migration-data-may-2019>

Information on overseas premium service applications for settlement visas and processing performance against service standards are not published in the International Operations Transparency data, but the number of out of country settlement applications received and processed within service standards is published in table Visa_01, which can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-operations-transparency-data-may-2019>

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Falkland Islands: UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Hilary Benn: [256921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Falkland Islands will be eligible for funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Jake Berry:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a 2017 manifesto commitment of this Government, to succeed European Structural Funding across the UK, following our departure from the European Union.

The UK Government recognises the importance of European Structural Funding programmes for the UK and its Overseas Territories and, given that Gibraltar has received this investment, the UK Government has an opportunity to consider whether the UK Shared Prosperity Fund could be a suitable programme to succeed European investment in Gibraltar.

As the Falkland Islands are not a recipient of European Structural Funds, the Falkland Islands are not in scope for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The UK Government is, however, considering several funding options for the Overseas Territories, following the UK's departure from the European Union.

Further details will be announced as part of the comprehensive Spending Review.

■ Religious Hatred: Islam**Nic Dakin:**[\[257527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government (a) is taking and (b) plans to take to address Islamophobia in the UK.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We remain deeply concerned at hatred directed against British Muslims and others because of their faith or heritage. This is utterly unacceptable and does not reflect the values of our country.

This Government has done more than any other to tackle Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred. In early March 2019, the Communities Secretary and Home Secretary chaired a high-level roundtable discussion on Islamophobia to hear directly from communities about their concerns. In addition, the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Anti-Muslim Hatred plays a critical role as the Government's main forum for discussing issues of concern around Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred.

Alongside, we have supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with over £2.5 million between 2016 and 2020 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred. We have committed £1.6 million for the Places of Worship Security Grant this year, and a further £5 million over three years to support security training for places of worship.

To agree a formal definition of Islamophobia the government will be appointing two advisers, building on the important work already undertaken by the Anti Muslim Hatred Working Group.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Developing Countries: Water****Patrick Grady:**[\[257066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the publication entitled, Tackling antimicrobial resistance 2019–2024: The UK's five-year national action plan, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the implementation of the Government's commitment to support greater access to water and sanitation; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK's national action plan on tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) sets out challenging five-year ambitions that begin to fulfil the UK's vision for a world in which AMR is contained and controlled by 2040. DFID and the Department for Health and Social Care are working closely together on tackling AMR and senior officials have met on this issue.

As part of tackling AMR, DFID continues to support health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes which emphasise the importance of improving infection control, and WASH in health facilities, which is key for the prevention of infections and antimicrobial resistance. The UK is committed to supporting countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 6 target of universal access to water and sanitation by 2030.

■ Malawi: Health Services**Patrick Grady:**[\[257067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the adequacy of access to (a) water, (b) sanitation and (c) hygiene facilities in Health Care Facilities in Malawi.

Harriett Baldwin:

Approximately 40% of health facilities in Malawi do not have adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

DFID's £110m Malawi Health Service Support Programme funds regular supply of piped water to health facilities in 28 districts and the construction of new health facilities that meet water, sanitation and hygiene standards. An estimated 400,000 Malawians will benefit from these facilities.

DFID Malawi has funded UNICEF to improve hygiene facilities in 13 Cholera-prone districts. The NGO WaterAid has received £2m from DFID through UK Aid Match to improve water, sanitation and hygiene services in marginalised districts of Malawi.

■ Overseas Aid

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[256918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to work with the leaders of local communities in developing countries to tailor aid and education to their needs.

Harriett Baldwin:

The approach that the Department for International Development takes to the design and implementation of development programmes emphasises the importance of local context. A network of Country Offices enables DFID to ensure we have staff with expert local knowledge and the ability to work directly with local partners.

The rules that govern our programming stress the importance of ensuring that the views and experiences of citizens and beneficiaries inform the design and delivery of our programmes. The department is currently working to improve the guidance and advice we offer staff on gaining the views of local communities and on adapting our programmes to changing local needs and circumstances.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Trade Fairs

Lyn Brown:

[\[257462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what information his Department holds on onward sales of arms and military equipment originally sold by UK defence industry where the original sale was made as a result of a UK arms fair.

Lyn Brown:

[\[257463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what information his Department holds on sales of arms and military equipment associated with (a) human rights abuses and (b) war crimes that were originally sold by the UK defence industry where the original sale was made a result of a UK arms fair.

Lyn Brown:

[\[257464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what international best practice frameworks are in place to regulate (a) marketing and (b) sales of arms and military equipment at arms fairs in the UK.

Lyn Brown:

[\[257465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what surveillance and enforcement procedures are in place to ensure that weapons and military equipment in contravention of international agreements to which the UK is a signatory are not (a) promoted, (b) sold during and (c) sold following the Defence and Security Equipment International 2019.

Lyn Brown: [\[257466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much was spent on surveillance and enforcement activity connected to the Defence and Security Equipment International arms fair in (a) 2013, (b) 2015 and (c) 2017.

Lyn Brown: [\[257467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what surveillance and enforcement measures are in place to ensure that no direct sales are made to countries subject to arms embargo at Defence and Security Equipment International 2019.

Lyn Brown: [\[257712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what surveillance and enforcement measures are in place to ensure that no onward sales are made to countries subject to arms embargo following sales to other countries at the Defence and Security Equipment International 2019.

Graham Stuart:

We do not hold information about the cost of surveillance and enforcement activities at the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) exhibitions in 2013, 2015, 2017.

All exports of military items from the UK are subject to export controls. Each export licence application is rigorously assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, which include criteria for human rights and international humanitarian law, and sanctions and embargoes. The Government will not grant a licence where to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria. Government approval is also required for the release of classified defence-related information or equipment by UK exporters to overseas entities for marketing purposes. The Export Control Joint Unit attends some UK arms fairs (including DSEI) to raise awareness with the organisers and the exhibitors of their export control obligations.

■ BeoutQ

Hannah Bardell: [\[257098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when he next plans to make representations to his Saudi Arabian counterpart on the alleged international broadcast rights infringement activities of the Saudi Arabian-based media company beoutQ.

Graham Stuart:

HM Government Ministers and HM Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have raised this matter with the Saudi Arabian Government and will continue to make representations about beoutQ's alleged broadcast infringement activities.

JUSTICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Stephen McPartland:**[\[911119\]](#)

What steps he is taking to improve access to the judicial system for litigants bringing civil money claims.

Paul Maynard:

This Government is investing over £1bn to modernise our courts and tribunals, including investment to improve the civil justice system.

The Online Civil Money Claims pilot, is a new service which went live in March 2018, and allows people to resolve money disputes online, for claims of up to £10,000. The digital service allows the public to simply and swiftly make their claim and the system is designed to be clear and easy to use. To date, the overall user satisfaction rate is 87% with over 68,000 claims made.

Kevin Hollinrake:[\[911125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to increase employment opportunities for prisoners after release.

Robert Buckland:

One year ago, our Education and Employment Strategy set out plans to transform the way prisoners develop the skills they need to secure employment on release.

Since then, we have overhauled the prison education system through implementing new contracts and a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). These allow governors to commission skills-based training and education that meets the needs of the local labour market.

We have also introduced the New Futures Network (NFN), which brokers partnerships between prisons and employers in England and Wales, and a new ROTL framework to increase the opportunities available for prisoners to gain experience in real workplaces.

■ **Debt Collection****Emma Reynolds:**[\[257139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 13 May 2019 to Question 252114, how many bailiffs have been removed from the certificated bailiff register following a judgment that they are not a fit and proper person to hold a certificate in each year since 2014.

Paul Maynard:

The Certificated Bailiff Register held centrally by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service does not record the reasons for why a certified enforcement agent has been removed from the register. Pursuant to the answer to Question 252114, reasons for cancelling a certificate include an agent leaving his or her employer, ceasing to work

as an enforcement agent or a judicial order that they were not a fit and proper person to hold a certificate.

■ Landlord and Tenant

Emma Reynolds:

[257138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 May 2019 to Question 252630 on Landlord and Tenant; whether the Government plans to make an estimate of the number of annual evictions using Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988; and what statistics the Government holds on the number of evictions in the private rented sector in a given year and the reasons for those evictions.

Paul Maynard:

The Government recently announced that it will put an end to ‘no-fault’ evictions by repealing section 21 of the Housing Act 1988. MHCLG Ministers will launch a consultation on the details of a better system that will work for landlords and tenants. The Government will collaborate with and listen to landlords, tenants and others in the private rented sector to develop a new deal for renting.

Whilst we hold data on the number of evictions in the private rented sector using section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, we do not have the reasons for those evictions.

NUMBER OF PRIVATE LANDLORD REPOSSESSIONS BY COUNTY COURT BAILIFFS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 2005-2018

Year	Private landlord reposessions
2005	3,979
2006	4,101
2007	4,342
2008	4,435
2009	4,618
2010	5,279
2011	5,852
2012	6,097
2013	6,049
2014	6,321
2015	6,061
2016	6,011
2017	6,260

NUMBER OF PRIVATE LANDLORD REPOSSESSIONS BY COUNTY COURT BAILIFFS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 2005-2018

2018

6,913

Source: Mortgage and Landlord Possession Statistics Quarterly

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**Rachel Reeves:****[257030]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many claimants (a) nationally, (b) in Leeds and (c) in Leeds West who are appealing against the refusal of their personal independence payment application have been waiting more than (i) three, (ii) six and (iii) 12 months for a tribunal hearing.

Paul Maynard:

This information is not held centrally.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) records numbers, waiting times and outcomes of appeals by benefit type, but will not necessarily identify Personal Independence Payment (PIP) appeals made specifically because the application for that benefit was refused. PIP consists of a daily living and a mobility component, both or either of which can be paid at standard or enhanced rate. Therefore, claimants for PIP may have claimed for both components, and only been awarded one, or sought the enhanced rate and only been awarded the standard rate. A claim may be successful, but may not have been at the level sought. HMCTS is unable to isolate such appeals.

Information about the volumes and clearance times of PIP appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) is published at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

Latest figures for PIP (to December 2018) indicate that since it was introduced, 3.9 million decisions have been made. Of these, 10% have been appealed and 5% have been overturned at Tribunals.

Conor McGinn:**[257128]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) average waiting time is and (b) range of waiting times are for a tribunal hearing for personal independence payment from the date of the case being received by the tribunal service until the date of the hearing in each year since 2014 in (i) St Helens, (ii) Merseyside and (iii) nationally.

Paul Maynard:

This information is not held centrally.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) statistics are not calculated from receipt of the appeal to the hearing, but from receipt of the appeal to the disposal of the case. An appeal is not necessarily disposed of at its first hearing. The final disposal

decision on the appeal may be reached after an earlier hearing had been adjourned (which may be directed by the judge for a variety of reasons, such as to seek further evidence), or after an earlier hearing date had been postponed (again, for a variety of reasons, often at the request of the appellant). An appeal may also have been decided at an earlier date by the First-tier Tribunal, only for the case to have gone on to the Upper Tribunal, to be returned once again to the First-tier, for its final disposal.

Information about waiting times for PIP appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) is published at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

Latest figures for PIP (to December 2018) indicate that since it was introduced, 3.9 million decisions have been made. Of these, 10% have been appealed and 5% have been overturned at Tribunals.

Conor McGinn:

[257130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of tribunal hearings that challenge a personal independence payment decision have been awarded in favour of the claimant in each year since 2014 in (a) St Helens (b) Merseyside (c) nationally.

Paul Maynard:

Latest figures for PIP (to December 2018) indicate that since it was introduced, 3.9 million decisions have been made. Of these, 10% have been appealed and 5% have been overturned at Tribunals.

Information about outcomes to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) is published at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

SSCS appeals are listed into the hearing venue nearest to the appellant's home address. The published data (which can be viewed at the link above) provide information about outcomes to PIP appeals in (a) St Helens (b) Merseyside and (c) nationally from 2015/16; data for the preceding year are provided below.

PROPORTION OF PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT ¹ HEARINGS IN FAVOUR OF THE APPELLANT (NATIONAL DATA CAN BE FOUND IN THE MAIN TABLES OF THE PUBLISHED STATS. VENUE DATA CAN BE FOUND IN THE PUBLISHED STATS FROM 2015/2016)

	St Helens ²	Merseyside ³	National
Financial Year ⁴			
2014-2015	42%	44%	50%

¹ Personal Independence Payment (New Claim Appeals) which replaces Disability Living Allowance was introduced on 8 April 2013, also includes Personal Independence Claims (Reassessments).

2 Data includes data for the St Helens venue. The Warrington & Runcorn venues closed in 2016 when the majority of postcodes for these areas were assigned to the St Helens venue.

3 Data includes data for Liverpool, Birkenhead, St Helens venue. The Warrington & Runcorn venues closed in 2016 when the majority of postcodes for these areas were assigned to the St Helens venue.

■ Prisoners

Richard Burgon:

[257059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the (a) average prison population and (b) average in-use certified normal accommodation was in each prison in the 12 months to September 2018.

Robert Buckland:

Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA), or uncrowded capacity, is the Prison Service's own measure of accommodation. CNA represents the good, decent standard of accommodation that the Service aspires to provide all prisoners. CNA differs to the operational capacity of a prison which is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime. It is determined by the Prison Group Directors on the basis of operational judgement and experience.

Where the operational capacity of a prison is higher than the CNA it will be classed as having the potential to be 'crowded', which can mean prisoners share cells. In the financial year 2017-18, 24.2% of the prison population was being held in crowded conditions, down from 24.5% in the previous year.

As part of prison reform, the long-term goal is to reduce crowding, while maintaining sufficient capacity in the prison estate to manage the demands of the courts and the sentenced population as efficiently as possible. This level is kept under constant review, considering fluctuations in the prison population and useable capacity across the estate

The average population and in-use certified normal accommodation for each prison in England and Wales in the 12 months to September 2018 is set out in the attached table.

*The Verne ceased operating as an Immigration Removal Centre in December 2017. It then reopened as a prison in July 2018 and monthly in-use CNA and population data from July 2018 has been included in the answer.

Individual prison population and capacity information (including in-use certified normal accommodation) for every prison in England and Wales is published monthly on the Ministry of Justice website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2019>

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ257059 Table.xlsx]

NORTHERN IRELAND■ **Licensing Laws: Northern Ireland****Lady Hermon:**[\[256966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to change the liquor licensing laws in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement.

John Penrose:

Liquor Licensing Law is a devolved issue in Northern Ireland and therefore a matter for the Department for Communities (DfC) within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Following a recent consultation, the Department for Communities (DfC) has concluded a change to current law would be beneficial to the hospitality and tourism sectors in Northern Ireland.

This is one of many pressing issues which highlights the urgent need to restore devolved government at the earliest opportunity.

TRANSPORT■ **Aircraft: Noise****Zac Goldsmith:**[\[257092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Health and Safety Executive and (b) Public Health England on the effect on health of aircraft noise.

Michael Ellis:

Officials from the Department have regular discussions with Public Health England to discuss a range of matters, including issues relating to the effect of aircraft noise on health. Recent discussions include engagement in the development of the Government's Aviation Strategy and PHE officials sit on the Department's Airspace and Noise Engagement Group.

Ministers and officials have not had any recent discussions with the Health and Safety Executive.

■ **Blue Badge Scheme****Martin Whitfield:**[\[257107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure that (a) British blue badge holders continue to receive the parking concessions that they are entitled to in EU and EFTA member states and (b) EU and EFTA member state citizens who hold blue badges continue to receive the parking concessions that they are entitled to in the UK in the event that the UK leaves the EU on or before 31 October 2019.

Chris Grayling:

The Government is considering all the potential implications arising from the UK's exit from the EU, including the implications for the continued recognition of Blue Badges. Whilst we are confident of agreeing continued mutual recognition, as this would be in the interest of both the UK and the EU, the negotiation of the arrangements for our exit from the EU are ongoing and no decisions on this topic have yet been taken.

■ Department for Transport: Iron and Steel**Nick Smith:**[\[257729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the proportion of UK steel and steel products procured by his Department in (a) 2017 and (b) 2018.

Andrew Jones:

Network Rail purchase ninety-seven percent of their steel from Scunthorpe. Both Highways England and High Speed Two Ltd procure steel through their respective supply chains. Raw materials for non-infrastructure purchases e.g. Rolling Stock are purchased by the prime contractor.

■ East Coast Rail Franchise and Rail Review**Andy McDonald:**[\[257748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timescale is for making a decision on the commercial models for the development of the East Coast Partnership; and what his timescale is for receiving Keith William's Rail Review Report.

Andrew Jones:

The plans for the ECP are progressing well. The aim is to continue the ongoing design of the Partnership in a sustainable way and deliver reliable and high-quality rail services for passengers in step with Keith Williams' root and branch review of the railway. The government will publish a White Paper setting out how we will implement the Review's recommendations in the autumn. Reform will start as early as 2020.

■ Heathrow Airport**Zac Goldsmith:**[\[256994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential requirement for public funding to contribute to the construction of Heathrow's third runway.

Michael Ellis:

The Government is clear that the Northwest Runway scheme at Heathrow will be financed in its entirety by the private sector. Ahead of the decision to designate the Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) the Government and its independent expert advisors concluded that, so far as can be assessed at this early stage of the process, Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) is able to privately finance expansion without Government support.

The Airports Commission also concluded that the scheme is financeable without Government support.

Zac Goldsmith:

[\[257091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of the level of the proposed penalty to be imposed on Heathrow airport in the event that it does not increase the number of passengers using public transport to access the airport by the time a third runway is operational.

Michael Ellis:

The Airports National Policy Statement is clear that any application for development consent must include details of how the applicant will achieve a wide range of mitigations, including public transport mode share targets.

Mitigations included in a Development Consent Order or recommended as a result of examination will become requirements that are enforceable under the Planning Act 2008. The detail of these requirements, including any penalties, will flow from the planning process, but could include financial provision for remedial measures or operating restrictions. A breach of any requirement without reasonable excuse would be a criminal offence, and there are wide-ranging powers for the relevant planning authority to investigate and intervene should there be any breach, including by injunctions.

■ Heathrow Airport: Air Pollution

Zac Goldsmith:

[\[256995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 on the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Michael Ellis:

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) published its report recommending a new target for the UK of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 on 2 May 2019. We now need to carefully consider this advice and the recommended policy approach for aviation that the CCC will produce later in 2019.

The Airports National Policy Statement sets out several strict environmental red lines that must be delivered for a third runway to gain development consent. These include no expansion if the applicant cannot demonstrate that the scheme would not materially impact the UK's ability to meet its carbon reduction targets.

■ M20: Safety

Tracey Crouch:

[\[257470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's timescale is for the installation on the M20 smart motorway of emergency refuge areas spaced at no more than 1 mile apart.

Michael Ellis:

The Government has always been clear that the benefits of smart motorways will not be delivered at the expense of safety, with Highways England setting a strict objective that each scheme should be at least as safe as a traditional motorway.

Operational evidence shows no consistent correlation between the number of vehicles stopping in live lane on smart motorways and the spacing of emergency areas – with a broadly comparable live lane breakdown rate even where emergency areas were three times further apart.

However, to help drivers feel more confident they can find a place to stop in an emergency, Highways England are reducing the maximum spacing of emergency areas on future smart motorway schemes from about every mile and a half (about 90 seconds at 60mph) to around every mile (about every minute at 60mph).

Highways England is committed to improving its emergency areas on the M20 by installing improved signage and conspicuous orange surfacing.

■ Model Aircraft: Registration**Dr David Drew:**[\[256908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the British Model Flying Association was not consulted on proposals to register model flying enthusiasts.

Michael Ellis:

In April, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) published its public consultation on the proposed charge on drone users and model aircraft flyers to cover the costs of running the Drone Operator Registration and Education Scheme. Prior to the launch of this consultation, the CAA engaged with a broad range of users, including a significant number of model flyers, both associations and individuals. Model flyers will be involved in the subsequent phases of development of the scheme.

Mr Gavin Shuker:[\[256993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the financial effect of the forthcoming Drone Registration Scheme on model flying clubs.

Michael Ellis:

The Government has tasked the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) with developing and operating the Unmanned Aircraft Operator Registration and Education Scheme to improve the accountability of all users of small unmanned aircraft, whether they be drones or model aircraft, and their awareness of how to fly them safely. The CAA has recently published its consultation on the proposed charge to cover the cost of running this service. The proposed charge balances keeping the charge for registration as low as possible and ensuring that the scheme funds itself. Consultation responses will inform the CAA's final decision on the charge, which will be taken in July 2019. The proposals will be in line with forthcoming requirements from the European Aviation Safety Agency.

■ Railways: Timetables**Andy McDonald:** [\[257749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on devolution of railway timetabling to the newly established Network Rail regions.

Andrew Jones:

On a national rail network many rail services will go beyond an individual rail region. Decisions over how far to devolve specific activities as part of their Putting Passengers First programme are a matter for Network Rail. The Department for Transport is supportive of the proposals in the programme and is continuing to engage with Network Rail as they implement the programme.

■ Regional Airports: Air Pollution**Zac Goldsmith:** [\[256996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to restrict the operation of regional airports to meet UK climate change targets.

Michael Ellis:

In its Aviation 2050 consultation, the Government recognises that regional airports are often vital drivers for local economies, providing connectivity, employment, and a hub for local transport schemes. The consultation sets out proposals to ensure the sector grows sustainably, taking measures to mitigate its environmental impacts, including limiting carbon emissions.

The Government is proposing that applications for future growth will be required to provide a full assessment of emissions, drawing on all feasible, cost-effective measures to limit their climate impact and demonstrating that their project will not have a material impact on the Government's ability to meet its carbon reductions target.

■ Taxis: Licensing**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[257751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 March 2019 to Question 232503 on Taxis: Licensing, what plans he has to bring forward primary legislation to reform taxi and private hire licensing laws.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Government will bring forward legislation in respect of the commitments made in the response to the Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing when time allows.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[257752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 April 2019 to Question 240585 on Taxis: Licensing, what progress he has made on bringing forward legislative proposals to restrict cross border hiring by private hire drivers.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Government continues to carefully consider how any restriction of out-of-area journeys by taxis and private hire vehicles proposed by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group might work in practice, with a view to legislating when time allows.

West Coast Partnership Rail Franchise**Andy McDonald:**[\[257750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the specifications for the West Coast Partnership rail franchise requires the new operator to be responsible for timetabling across the route of that franchise.

Andrew Jones:

In its Shadow Operator role, the West Coast Partnership operator will, working in conjunction with Network Rail, HS2 Ltd and other Train and Freight Operators, develop advice for the Secretary of State on options for the post HS2 launch Train Service Specification on both HS2 and WCML routes. The West Coast Partnership operator's role in the timetabling process will be consistent with existing practices across the rail industry both before and after HS2 services are launched.

TREASURY**Armed Forces: Pay****Nia Griffith:**[\[256979\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to publish a letter from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body Chair providing information about Government policy on public sector pay for the forthcoming pay round.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Defence Secretary wrote to the Chair of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in November 2018, setting out their remit for the 2019/20 pay round.

This year's pay round is currently in progress, and the Government will respond to the recommendations of the Pay Review Bodies in due course.

The pay round for 2020/21 has not begun yet and will commence as usual in the Autumn.

Last year, members of the Armed Forces received a well-above inflation increase of 2.9%, worth £680 in pay, plus a one-off payment of £300, to an average soldier.

Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**Mr Philip Hollobone:**[\[256997\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will place in the libraries of both Houses the methodology for calculating payments to Equitable Life policyholders.

John Glen:

The methodology for calculating payments to Equitable Life policyholders was published in 2011 and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-design> .

Mr Philip Hollobone:**[257002]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times corrections of payments to Equitable Life policyholders have been made; and what guarantees are in place to ensure that no further errors in the payments and calculation method will be made.

John Glen:

The payment calculation has been examined by a panel of actuarial peers and the Equitable Members Action Group. No errors in the calculation methodology have been identified.

Whilst the Payment Scheme was in operation policyholders could check the input data received from Equitable Life that was used as the basis for their individual calculation. Where an error was found in the records Equitable Life held, a policyholder could request an independent review of their individual payment and where necessary a payment could be recalculated.

The Payment Scheme is now closed. The Payment Scheme's final progress report set out the numbers of independent reviews conducted and this can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-final-report>

■ Non-domestic Rates**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[257140]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to review the system of business rates.

Jesse Norman:

The Government concluded the last fundamental review of business rates in 2016. Respondents to the review agreed that property based taxes are easy to collect, difficult to avoid, relatively stable compared to other taxes, and that they have a clear link with local authority spending.

The Government has taken repeated action to reduce the burden of business rates for all ratepayers. Reforms and reliefs announced since Budget 2016 will reduce rates by more than £13 billion over the next five years. This includes switching from RPI to CPI indexation, increasing the frequency of revaluations, increasing the threshold for the standard multiplier to £51,000, and doubling the threshold for Small Business Rate Relief from April 2017, which means 655,000 of the smallest businesses now pay no business rates at all.

■ Public Sector: Redundancy Pay

Dr David Drew:

[\[256909\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason he has included employees of Magnox Ltd in the consultation on the redundancy compensation cap for public sector workers.

Elizabeth Truss:

The scope of the cap is guided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) independent classification of public sector bodies. The ONS determines whether a body falls within the public sector by reference to objective criteria based upon governance, funding, ownership and function. Magnox Ltd is classified as a public sector body by the ONS classification guide.

We are undertaking staged implementation of the cap, with the first stage capturing: the UK Civil Service, non-departmental public bodies, executive agencies, non-ministerial departments, the National Health Service, academy schools, local government, and police forces. The cap on exit payments will then be extended to the rest of the public sector including Magnox Ltd, as guided by ONS classification, in due course.

■ Social Security Benefits: Uprating

Peter Dowd:

[\[257133\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2019 to Question 254832 on Social Security Benefits: Uprating, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of resuming the uprating of social security payments in line with CPI for each of the next five years; and from which budget his Department plans to pay for that uprating.

Elizabeth Truss:

Twice a year, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) produce detailed forecasts for the coming five years, assessing the likely impact of policy decisions and expected developments in the economy. A key component of this is the welfare annually managed expenditure (AME) forecast, which estimates future government expenditure on social security benefits and tax credits.

The current welfare freeze, which was announced in 2015, runs from 2016/17 to 2019/20. As such, the cost of resuming the uprating of frozen benefits from 2020/21 is already accounted for in the welfare forecast – which combines DWP, HMRC and BEIS AME expenditure. The OBR does not routinely disaggregate the cost of uprating within the forecast.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Employment: Learning Disability****Kevin Brennan:**[\[256950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people with learning disabilities are given (a) adequate support and (b) opportunities to hold down meaningful employment.

Kevin Brennan:[\[256951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support employers in creating equal opportunities for people with learning disabilities in the workplace.

Justin Tomlinson:

Improving employment opportunities for people with a learning disability is a Government priority. We take a life course approach and are working with other Departments to tackle barriers to employment that start early in life. For example, we work with Department for Education on implementing the Maynard Task Force recommendations which help people with learning disabilities to access Apprenticeships. DWP is also testing ways to improve our support to this group, through initiatives like the Local Supported Employment proof of concept, which seeks to build our evidence base on how we can best help users of adult social care (many of whom have learning disabilities) to be able to work.

Through Disability Confident, we are encouraging employers to offer more opportunities to disabled people, including people with a learning disability. Nearly 12,000 employers are signed up to the scheme and we recently announced our commitment to increase this number to 20,000 over the year.

Access to Work supports disabled people, including those with learning disabilities, who are in work or participating on Traineeships, apprenticeships or supported internships. Last year, record numbers of people with learning disabilities received support from Access to Work, with figures up 22% on 16/17.

The Government is working with the Supported Business Alliance (SBA) and The British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) to:

- help them develop a new quality mark for supported businesses and
- to develop a new long term element of Access to Work to continue support for those already working for a supported business, and help more disabled people to join them.

This will help those with the most severe barriers to work, including people with learning disabilities.

We are investing £40m in a new Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, which rolls out in late 2019 and is expected to benefit 10,000 people. It will provide highly personalised packages of employment support for disabled people,

including those with a learning disability, who are at least a year away from moving into work.

■ Poverty: Children

Chris Ruane:

[256959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2019 to Question 254154 on Poverty: Children, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the decline in the number of children in absolute low-income households between 2004-5 and 2009-10.

Will Quince:

Absolute low income takes the 60 per cent of median income threshold from 2010/11 and moves this in line with inflation. This is designed to assess how low incomes are faring with reference to inflation. The percentage of individuals in absolute low income will decrease if individuals with lower incomes see their real incomes rising (increasing by more than inflation).

Trends in the number of children in absolute poverty can be found using the link below, in table 4.4tr, in the file “children-trends-hbai-1994-95-2017-18-tables.ods”.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789816/hbai-2017-2018-tables-ods-files.zip

Between 2004/05 and 2009/10 the number of children in absolute low income households before housing costs fell, indicating that children in lower income households saw their real incomes rise by more than inflation. However, the number of children in absolute low income households after housing costs was 3.8m in both 2004/05 and 2009/10. This suggests that for low income households with children, these real rises in income were offset by increasing housing costs during this period.

Chris Ruane:

[256960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of children in absolute poverty in each year between 1989 and 1997.

Will Quince:

National statistics on the number of children living in absolute low income are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication.

HBAI data is unavailable before 1994/95 and are for the United Kingdom from 2002/03 onwards. Earlier years are for Great Britain only. The number of children in absolute poverty from 1994/95 can be found using the link below, in table 4.4tr, in the file “children-trends-hbai-1994-95-2017-18-tables.ods”.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789816/hbai-2017-2018-tables-ods-files.zip

■ Universal Credit

Ruth George:

[257147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claims that had a deduction applied had (a) up to 20 per cent, (b) between 21 and 30 per cent, (c) between 31 and 40 per cent and (d) more than 41 per cent deducted in the latest period for which data is available.

Alok Sharma:

The Government recognises the importance of safeguarding the welfare of claimants who have incurred debt. Universal Credit already has procedures and regulations in place to protect claimants from excessive deductions. The maximum rate of deductions cannot normally exceed 40 per cent of the Universal Credit standard allowance, and from October 2019 this will be reduced to 30 per cent.

However, last resort deductions can be applied to protect vulnerable claimants from eviction and/or having their fuel supply (gas/electricity) cut off, by providing a last resort repayment method for arrears of these essential services. In these circumstances, when it is considered to be in the best interests of the claimant and their family, deductions may be taken above the 40 per cent limit.

If a claimant is in financial difficulty as a result of the level of deductions being made they can contact the Department to request that a reduction in deductions be considered.

Of all eligible claims to Universal Credit Full Service due a payment in Feb 2019, 57% (840,000 claims) had a deduction.

Of this 840,000 claims with a deduction:

- a) 50% (420,000 claims) had deductions up to 20% of the Standard Allowance (29% of all eligible claims).
- b) 20% (170,000 claims) had deductions between 21% and 30% of the Standard Allowance (12% of all eligible claims).
- c) 28% (238,000 claims) had deductions between 31% and 40% of their Standard Allowance (16% of all eligible claims).
- d) 1% (13,000 claims) had deductions above 40% of their Standard Allowance (1% of all eligible claims).

Notes:

Claim numbers may not match official statistics caseloads due to small methodological differences.

Claim numbers are rounded to the nearest 1,000

When categorising claims into the groups above the figures for the percentage of the Standard Allowance for individual claims have been rounded to the nearest percent.

Deductions include advance repayments and all other deductions, but exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.

Ruth George:

[\[257148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to introduce an affordability test for deductions taken from universal credit payments.

Alok Sharma:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer to Question 218205 answered on 7 February 2018.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Dogs: Imports

Alex Norris:

[\[254872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported (a) in total and (b) from each country of origin using the Balai Directive in 2018.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 May 2019. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

The numbers of dogs that were imported in total and from each country of origin using the Balai Directive in 2018 were as follows:

The total number of dogs imported in 2018 was **37,144** ~~20,845~~.

The breakdown of this figure by country is as follows:

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	DOGS
Austria	1 10
Belgium	1 4
Bulgaria	216 61
Croatia	265 149
Cyprus	3566 3156
Czech Republic	63 115
Denmark	1
Estonia	2
Finland	3 2
France	72 19
Germany	13 4
Greece	107 125
Hungary	1585 519
Ireland (Rep. of)	7828 4896

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	DOGS
Italy	26 24
Latvia	1 2
Lithuania	6 9
Malta	4 6
Netherlands	111 19
Poland	881 420
Portugal	173 2
Romania	17189 7461
Slovakia	23 9
Slovenia	3 2
Spain	4995 3816
Sweden	9 8
Switzerland	2
UK	3
Total	37,144 20,845

The data for commercial imports covers the number of animals imported into the UK, and was extracted from TRACES through the Qlikview facility by searching for imports of dogs and their commodity codes in 2018 to the UK by country of origin. These figures cover all commercially imported dogs, including commercial puppies, rescue dogs, research dogs and unaccompanied pets.

The information that the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has provided is a true reflection of the information that is held. APHA cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data, as the information has been entered into TRACES by a third party.

Alex Norris:

[254873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many dogs were imported (a) in total and (b) from each country of origin via the Pet Travel Scheme in 2018.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 May 2019. The correct answer should have been:

David Rutley:

194,712 307,357 dogs were imported in total via the Pet Travel Scheme in 2018.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is unable to provide a breakdown of the number of dogs travelling under the scheme by country as it does not hold that information.

The data regarding the Pet Travel Scheme is taken from APHA's system for recording pets' throughput based on information provided by checkers employed by approved carriers of pet animals.

The information that APHA has provided is a true reflection of the information that is held. APHA cannot guarantee the accuracy of this data, as it can only rely on the information that has been entered into the pets' returns by a third party.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility (Kelly Tolhurst):

[\[HCWS1592\]](#)

I wish to provide an update to Hon. Members on the steps that the Government is taking to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the Post Office network.

The Government sets the strategic direction for Post Office Limited, to maintain a national network accessible to all and to do so on a sustainable financial basis and allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business.

We recognise the Post Office's distinct social purpose and the important role post offices play in communities across the country, which is why our 2017 manifesto committed to safeguard the network, protect existing rural services and work with the Post Office to extend the availability of business and banking services to families and small businesses in rural areas.

Between 1997 and 2010 the post office network reduced in size by 37% resulting in the loss of over 7,000 post offices. Since 2010 we have invested over £2 billion in the network. This funding sought to increase the viability of the network by making it more accessible, modern and tailored to customers' needs while reducing the long-term burden on the taxpayer.

The Government has no programme of post office closures. Post Office Limited has opened over 400 branches since April 2017 and Government is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of the network. We not only place a contractual commitment on Post Office Limited to maintain a network of 11,500 branches, but also stipulate stringent access criteria to ensure that this large network is accessible to citizens across the country. More than 93% of the UK population live within one mile of their nearest branch, with more than 99% within three miles.

There are now over 11,500 branches and the Post Office network is at its most stable since 2013, having changed in size by under 1% over this period. This overall change accommodates a level of churn in what is an extremely diverse network, as branches close and are replaced, and Post Office Limited is therefore used to working quickly with local stakeholders to provide replacement services.

Government subsidy ensures that branches serving our rural communities that need additional support receive it so that they can stay open. In order to provide value for money for the taxpayer the subsidy to the post office has reduced. This fact reflects the progress that the business has made: returning to profit after 16 years of losses, providing a stable network and reducing its reliance on the taxpayer.

Beyond 2021, Government remains committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the network and will work with Post Office Limited to achieve this.

It is crucial that running a Post Office is attractive and sustainable for postmasters and they should be fairly remunerated for the services they provide. Post Office Limited's successful renegotiation of the banking framework with 28 High Street banks, announced on 15 April, secured a significant increase to the overall fees they receive from the banks. As a result of this, they will double and, in some case, treble the rate that agents receive for processing deposits from October 2019. For example, in a Main Post Office branch, postmasters will receive £8.16 for processing a £8,000 cash deposit, compared with the £3.12 they currently receive.

98% of the Post office network is franchised and postmasters are vital to the delivery of the network. The remuneration for delivering post office services should be combined with a successful retail offer in order for postmasters to thrive in today's competitive retail environment.

The Government has rightly moved with the times as many of us now prefer to access services online. Whilst this has an impact on the Post Office, we cannot ignore people's desire to transact with Government digitally from the convenience of their own homes. However, we are also committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to all citizens and the post office network does and will continue to play a key role in this.

We are committed to working with Post Office Limited and our postmasters to develop the business and offer, in order to maintain the delivery of services that our constituents want and need, so that the Post Office remains at the heart of communities across the country.

EDUCATION

■ Independent panel report on post-18 education and funding

The Secretary of State for Education (Mr Damian Hinds): [\[HCWS1589\]](#)

Today the Secretary of State for Education will provide a statement to the House, announcing that the independent panel, chaired by Philip Augar, set up to provide input to the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding has now published its report. The report is available in full on gov.uk and was laid as a Command Paper last week.

The Secretary of State for Education (Mr Damian Hinds): [\[HCWS1590\]](#)

Today I will provide a statement to the House, announcing that the independent panel, chaired by Philip Augar, set up to provide input to the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding has now published its report. The report is available in full on gov.uk and was laid as a Command Paper last week.

■ Student Finance

Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore): [\[HCWS1593\]](#)

I am confirming that eligibility rules for students from the EEA and Switzerland, and their family members, who commence courses in England in the Academic Year starting in August 2020 will remain unchanged. EEA/Swiss nationals will remain eligible for home fee status, undergraduate, postgraduate and advanced learner financial support from Student Finance England for the duration of their course under the current eligibility rules. This will provide certainty to providers and their prospective students from the EEA and Switzerland.

This announcement also applies to funding for apprenticeships, advanced learner loans and further education 19+.

EEA and Swiss students and staff make an important contribution to our universities and it is testament to our system that so many students from abroad choose to come and study here.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Interim NHS People Plan

Minister of State for Health (Stephen Hammond): [\[HCWS1587\]](#)

Today I am depositing in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of the interim People Plan, which sets out the steps the NHS will take to ensure the health system has the people, culture and leadership it needs to deliver the Long Term Plan. The interim People Plan has been developed by Baroness Harding, the Chair of NHS Improvement, in partnership with front-line staff, NHS employers and representative organisations including Trades Unions and Royal Colleges. The plan takes an unflinching look at the challenges facing people working across the NHS and, importantly, for the first time considers what action employers and NHS leaders need to take to make the NHS a great place to work. In future, careers in the NHS will better reflect the different lives, aspirations and expectations of those that choose to work in it. In addition to the action the NHS will take to ensure the NHS is a great place to work, the interim People Plan also sets out a number of practical steps the NHS will take now to increase the supply of clinical staff. A consultation is planned exploring proposals to introduce greater pension flexibility, which are designed to address disincentives that may encourage senior clinicians to limit or reduce their workloads whilst participating in the NHS Pension Scheme. A final People Plan will be published soon after the conclusion of the Spending Review.

HOME OFFICE**■ False and Authentic Documents Online (FADO) System - Schengen Opt-out Decision**

The Minister of State for Immigration (Caroline Nokes): [\[HCWS1588\]](#)

The Government has decided not to opt out of the draft Regulation that establishes a new legislative basis for FADO and repeals Joint Action 98/700/JHA.

This is a continuing measure and the Government values the benefits of FADO. It is a very useful EU tool which helps us to validate identity and travel documents, primarily for border, immigration and wider law enforcement purposes. It is a database which contains detailed images of genuine travel and identity documents issued by EU member states and false documents encountered at the border and elsewhere.

We have always been a key contributor to the FADO database and the draft Regulation will ensure the continuity and development of FADO. The FADO system itself will remain fundamentally unchanged.

Until the UK leaves the EU we remain a full member, and the Government will continue to consider the application of the UK's opt-out from EU legislation on a case by case basis, with a view to maximising the UK's efforts to collaborate with EU on a security partnership once the UK leaves the EU.

JUSTICE**■ Refreshed Memorandum of Understanding for justice devolution with Greater Manchester**

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Mr David Gauke):
[\[HCWS1591\]](#)

On 31 May my honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice Edward Argar signed a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for justice devolution with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

This agreement replaces the current MoU, published in July 2016. It details the priority areas for the delivery of justice outcomes within GMCA. The commitments agreed between the Department (Ministry of Justice) and GMCA build on the previous agreement, recognise new challenges, and identify new opportunities for developing a broader, more integrated approach which improves outcomes and experiences for victims, witnesses, and offenders, as well as the communities and neighbourhoods in which they live.

The aim of the MoU is to increase local influence and improve partnership working to increase efficiencies and reduce reoffending. Delivery will take place within the context of the whole system approach to public services which is advocated by GMCA. The MoU fits with the Government's priority to reduce reoffending and our 2017 Manifesto commitment to further enhance the role of Police and Crime Commissioners.

The areas covered in this refreshed MoU are Youth Justice, Smarter Justice, Adult Offender Management and The Victim's Journey. In summary:

Youth Justice

With the aim of targeting resources where they can be most effective, the MoU focuses on adopting a preventative, problem solving approach which puts the people in the right service at the right time. This includes establishing a local consortium to focus on resettlement from custody and prioritising specified cohorts in youth justice policy initiatives, including data sharing. The focus of this section aligns with the [Youth Justice Board \(YJB\) national standards](#) which were published earlier this year.

Smarter Justice

We will work towards greater family involvement to support compliance with regular judicial supervision. Along with GMCA we will develop inter-agency planning to increase confidence in community sentences and ensure pre-sentence reports identify vulnerable cohorts. There will also be work carried out to help identify where family centred principles are best integrated at different points in the system.

Reforming Adult Offender Management

We want to optimise the opportunities created through the new probation model to improve delivery within the context of Greater Manchester's unified approach to public services. This will include a programme of work to support increased viability of community disposals and to co-design approaches to delivery of probation services that support place-based integration. We will also explore co-commissioning options through the Greater Manchester Reform Investment Fund.

The Victim's Journey

We will work with GMCA as they seek to improve services for victims to provide a seamless service by using innovative approaches, including digital pathways, jointly evaluating the effectiveness of nationally commissioned services for victims, agreeing a programme to develop stronger links and ways of working at local level for the benefit of witnesses in GM and working to understand the impact of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme on Victims of Terrorism.

This summary covers the main commitments of the MoU. It is available in full at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/moj-gmca-memorandum-of-understanding-for-justice-devolution>. Work will begin now to ensure we jointly deliver these commitments.