



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 18 July 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 18 July 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

■ Biofuels: Plastics

Paul Farrelly:

[\[277119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) support the growth and (b) minimise the adverse environmental effects of the bioplastics industry.

Andrew Stephenson:

This Government is building a globally competitive sustainable plastics industry through research and innovation. As announced in the recent Bioeconomy Strategy, the Department will provide up to £60 million, bolstered by considerable industry support, to establish the UK as the world's leading innovator in smart sustainable plastic packaging. We will soon be launching a call for evidence on the impacts of bio-based and biodegradable plastics on the environment and their interaction with the circular economy.

■ Buildings: Electricity and Heating

Seema Malhotra:

[\[275753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the most popular models of (a) electricity and (b) heat microgeneration in buildings throughout the UK.

Chris Skidmore:

The Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) scheme supports solar, wind, hydro, anaerobic digestion and micro-combined heat and power technologies. On the basis of installations on Ofgem's central FIT register, solar is the most popular method of electricity generation accounting for 99% of all installations (over 830,000) supported under the scheme.

The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) supports biomass only boilers and biomass pellet stoves, air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps and solar thermal panels. The Domestic RHI has accredited over 69,000 applications for the residential microgeneration of heat. As of May 2019, air source heat pumps are the most popular method of heat microgeneration, making up 54% of total accredited applications. More deployment data can be found [here](#).

It should be noted that there are some forms of microgeneration not covered by the RHI or FITs scheme.

■ Coal

Philip Davies:

[\[277308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much coal the UK has stockpiled.

Chris Skidmore:

Stocks of coal are held by producers, electricity generators and others. Total stocks at the end of 2018 were 5.2 million tonnes, which remains steady when compared with 2017.

■ Energy: Prices

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[277191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the affordability of domestic energy costs as the UK transitions to a carbon neutral environment by 2050.

Chris Skidmore:

The transition to a clean, low carbon economy can help give us towns and cities with cleaner air and warmer homes with lower bills, while growing our economy and supporting new jobs in growing low carbon industries.

But as our economy changes, we must make sure that this growth is inclusive, benefits people right across the UK, supporting workers as industries change and ensuring the costs as well as the benefits are shared fairly, protecting consumers, workers and businesses. That is why we have announced that HM Treasury will be conducting a review into the costs of decarbonisation, including how to achieve this transition in a way that works for households, businesses and public finances, and the implications for UK competitiveness.

Energy efficiency will help keep costs down for consumers, while supporting the decarbonisation of the housing stock towards carbon targets. The annual running costs of a Band C rated home are £650 lower than the average Band E rated home. This is why we set out our aspiration in the Clean Growth Strategy that as many homes as possible should be EPC C Band C by 2035 where practical, cost effective and affordable. Low income and vulnerable households are supported in making energy efficiency improvements under the reformed Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme. Eligibility for the new scheme includes around 6.7 million low income households, an increase from around 4.7 million from the previous ECO2t scheme.

Domestic energy costs are also kept down through Ecodesign regulations which improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of energy-related products and appliances, and Energy Labelling regulations which allow consumers to choose the most energy efficient products. In 2020, the Government's current estimates show that ecodesign and energy labelling requirements will save around £100 for the average dual-fuel household on their energy bills. Going forward, we will continue to

support ambitious requirements which will further minimise energy bills for households and carbon emissions.

Additionally, smart meters are already reducing how much energy consumers use and saving them money. Smart meters will support the realisation of billions of pounds of benefits to Great Britain over the next few decades, through avoiding costly network upgrades, supporting more rapid integration of electric vehicles and renewable generation, and more efficient use of the national grid system. This will ultimately lower emissions, cut costs, and give households more control.

The Government is reviewing the future energy retail market jointly with Ofgem to ensure all consumers secure a fair deal for their energy and are appropriately safeguarded in the future.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Temporary Employment: Pay

Jon Trickett:

[\[277113\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the rate of pay which requires approval for temporary staff was set at £750 per day in his Departments announcement of 4 July.

Kevin Foster:

Ministerial approval has been set at £750 per day as a control mechanism to consistently achieve value for money, provide greater transparency and to ensure that all other resourcing options have been considered.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Churches: Equality

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[277265\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what discussions the (a) Church of England and (b) Church in Wales have had with (i) other religious and faith bodies, (ii) the Government and (iii) the Equality and Human Rights Commission on the exemption of those bodies from equality legislation for appointments and provision of services.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

[Holding answer 17 July 2019]: The Equality Act 2010 contains provisions that allow religious organisations to apply a limited range of religious occupational requirements to comply with the doctrines of the religion or to avoid conflicting with the strongly held religious beliefs of a significant number of the religion's followers. The ability to apply religious occupational requirements arises where the employment is "for the purposes of an organised religion" and is not specific to the Church of England.

The Church of England has regular discussions with other religious and faith bodies, with HM Government, and with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on matters of mutual interest. From time to time these will include reflections on the importance for religious freedom of the provisions that protect faith and belief in the Equality Act.

■ Churches: St Albans

Sir Oliver Heald: [\[277094\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 269594, whether the Diocese of St Albans holds any records of the type of metal stolen.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

[Holding answer 17 July 2019]: This information is not held centrally. The St Albans Diocesan Office keeps a record of the types of metals stolen from churches and the frequency of thefts. For a more detailed breakdown please contact the Pastoral and Advisory Secretary, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, Herts. AL1 1HE.

■ Churches: Theft

Sir Oliver Heald: [\[277093\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 269594 on Churches, which dioceses keep records of (a) thefts and (b) attempted thefts of metal.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

[Holding answer 17 July 2019]: Detailed information on this is not held centrally. Historic England has the most comprehensive list of churches and other listed buildings that have experienced thefts or attempted thefts of metal.

Sir Oliver Heald: [\[277095\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the Commissioners plan to investigate which roofing material is (a) least likely to be stolen and (b) best value; and if she will make a statement.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

[Holding answer 17 July 2019]: The Cathedrals and Church Buildings Division of the Archbishops' Council provide advice and guidance to churches on a range of issues, including roofing materials. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings>

Incidents of theft from non-metal roofs are rare, though there is a risk to some rarer types of slate or stone, which are most vulnerable when they are removed for repair. Terne-coated stainless steel is unlikely to be stolen as it is difficult to manipulate and has a low scrap value for the work and risk involved. Metal and other material is least likely to be stolen from a church that has installed an effective alarm.

Lead is the most likely metal to be stolen due to its value and the ease of removing it, followed by copper roofing and rainwater pipes.

■ George Bell

Frank Field: [\[275686\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2019 to Question 227049 on George Bell, whether the £29,800 represents the full payment for all costs incurred by the church in its initial judgement on Bishop George Bell; and what proportion of that sum was used for costs for (a) lawyers and (b) damages.

Dame Caroline Spelman:

[Holding answer 15 July 2019]: The former First Church Estates Commissioner gave the answer to the General Synod in July 2016, this can be found on page 58 of the Reports and Proceedings of the General Synod:

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/July%202016%20Report%20of%20Proceedings%20w.index_.pdf)

[10/July%202016%20Report%20of%20Proceedings%20w.index_.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/July%202016%20Report%20of%20Proceedings%20w.index_.pdf). As the former First Church Estates Commissioner confirmed in his replies on that occasion, it is not the usual practice of the Church Commissioners to report on legal expenditure.

DEFENCE

■ Intelligence Services: Detainees

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[277216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to her oral contribution of 8 July 2019, Official Report, column 19, when she plans to announce the change of policy in relation to guidance on sharing and receiving intelligence.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made today (HCWS1746).

Attachments:

1. 20190718 - Written Ministerial Statement [HCWS1746 - Cabinet Office Review of Consolidated Guidance.pdf]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[277107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives from mobile phone operating companies on establishing a roaming system in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James:

Improving mobile coverage in rural areas is a priority for government and we are considering all of the options available, including rural roaming, to facilitate this.

■ **Nuisance Calls****Paul Farrelly:**[\[277121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to reduce the number of (a) bogus and (b) nuisance phone calls.

Margot James:

We have introduced a range of measures in recent months to reduce the number of nuisance calls. These include making company directors personally liable for any breach of the rules by their company and banning unwanted calls from claims management companies and pensions providers in the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018. We are also funding the National Trading Standards Scams Team to provide telephone call blocking technology to vulnerable people, as announced during the Chancellor's budget last year. We recognise there are a minority of companies that continue to flout the law and we will work closely with regulators, industry and consumer groups to identify further ways of addressing the issue.

EDUCATION■ **Adoption: Yorkshire and the Humber****Rachael Maskell:**[\[276231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many babies under six weeks old were placed for adoption in Yorkshire and the Humber by local authority area in each year since 2010.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department collects data on children who are placed for adoption. However, the information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The breakdown requested and the following significant caveats are:

- Data isn't collected on the area where the child is finally placed for adoption.
- Data isn't collected from all routes of adoption, for example private adoptions.

The number of looked after children, nationally, who were adopted by age is published for the last 5 years in table E1 of the statistical release: Children Looked After in England (including Adoption) year ending 31 March 2018, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018>.

Figures on the number of children who ceased care due to adoption in 2018 by local authority is published in the underlying data table 'CEA2018' from the same statistical release: Children Looked After in England (including Adoption) year ending 31 March 2018.

■ Apprenticeships: Degrees

Paul Farrelly: [\[277122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that school leavers are informed of degree apprenticeships.

Anne Milton:

We are pleased that Universities UK has recognised degree apprenticeships as a 'growing success story'. Degree apprenticeships give employers the opportunity to work with universities to develop the higher-level skills they need, and apprentices the opportunity to gain a degree while they earn. Alongside our work to raise awareness of these benefits, we are also making it easier to find and apply for vacancies with employers of all sizes.

Current vacancies can be found on the 'Find an apprenticeship' website, the UCAS 'Careers finder' site, and employers' own websites. We encourage employers to promote their future vacancies up to a year in advance in our Higher and Degree Listing, which is published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships>. We are aiming to publish our next listing, for vacancies commencing in September 2020, in September 2019 and this will be distributed to schools and handed out at events.

The Degree Apprenticeships Development Fund has supported initiatives including UCAS careers fairs, materials on apprenticeships for schools, and apprenticeship ambassadors. In the 2018/19 academic year, we attended 30 UCAS Higher Education Exhibitions across England, directly engaging with an estimated 8,500 young people, and worked with UCAS to contact over a quarter of a million more young people by email to raise awareness of apprenticeships

We also provide a free service to schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge project, to make sure that teachers have the knowledge and support to enable them to promote apprenticeships to their students. This has enabled over three quarters of a million young people to hear about apprenticeships since the project's launch in 2016.

■ Primary Education: Finance

Neil O'Brien: [\[277297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of primary schools which had (a) fewer than 100, (b) 101 to 200, (c) 201 to 300, (d) 301 to 400, (e) 401 to 600 and (f) 601 or more pupils, were in deficit in each of the five most recent years for which data are available.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes the income and expenditure, including revenue balances, annually for local authority maintained schools and for academies.

The Department published data for local authority maintained schools' Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) for the years 2013-14 to 2017-18 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-local-authority-school-finance-data#local-authority-and-school-finance>.

The Department published data for academy schools' Academies' Accounting Returns (AAR) for 2016/17, when revenue reserve was first collected at school level, and 2017/18 at: <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/Help/DataSources>.

The attached tables give the requested breakdown. Information for years prior to those provided are not available. The figures for academies are as reported for the individual schools and do not include any surpluses or deficits at trust level for those in multi academy trusts.

Attachments:

1. 277297_PDF [277297_school_deficits_table.pdf]

Private Education**Bim Afolami:****[276596]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of UK children that have attended fee paying schools in the UK in each year since 2010.

Anne Milton:

The number of pupils attending independent schools in England in each year since 2010 is published in table 1a of the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' statistical release. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>.

Information on the nationality of pupils is not collected and information on children attending schools in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the devolved administrations.

Pupil Exclusions**Neil O'Brien:****[277298]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) exclusions for violence against an adult and (b) exclusions for verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult there have been in each of the last 20 years for which data available.

Nick Gibb:

The National Statistics release, 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England 2016 to 2017', includes information on the number of permanent and fixed period exclusions.

The release is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017>.

The data includes information on exclusions by main reason and year from 2006/07 to 2016/17. Comparable data is not available before 2006/07.

■ Schools: Carbon Emissions

Layla Moran: [\[277289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department issues schools with guidance on reducing their carbon footprint; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has committed to reducing UK emissions to net zero by 2050.

The Department is committed to delivering new schools that meet energy efficiency targets and supporting the existing estate to reduce its energy demand through advice, support and capital grants. The Department is surveying the condition of every school through the Condition Data Collection to support the development of future priorities for investment, including measures to achieve zero carbon. This includes projects such as the Good Estate Management website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>.) and providing loans for new technologies to deliver clean energy.

From 2021, all new schools will be designed to support the net zero carbon reduction targets.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Emma Hardy: [\[276599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the cost to his Department of guides for teaching relationships and sex education in schools for the 2020 school year.

Emma Hardy: [\[276600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the introduction of compulsory relationships and sex education in schools in each of the next three years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department announced a budget of £6 million in financial year 2019-20 to develop this programme of support for schools. Funding beyond 2019-20 is a matter for the forthcoming Spending Review.

The Department has also published an impact assessment which provided an estimate of the impact of the new regulations on the school system. The assessment includes reference to the fact that many schools are already teaching a great deal of the content in the new statutory guidance. The impact assessment can be accessed here.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781029/Updated_impact_assessment_-_Relationships_Education_and_Relationships_and_Sex_Education.pdf

The Department has published the statutory guidance and guides for parents, which schools can use to inform their engagement. These are available here, respectively:

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

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

The Department is committed to supporting schools to teach the new subjects to a high standard. The Department will continue to work with subject experts to ensure schools are supported to improve their practice, focusing on an implementation guide, support for training needs, and materials. This will also include sharing effective practice so schools can learn lessons from each other.

■ Universities: Sexual Harassment

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[277109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that the sexual harassment policies of universities are fit for purpose.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[277110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of sexual harassment at universities on the prospects of the victims of that harassment.

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[277111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support provided to victims of sexual assault at universities.

Chris Skidmore:

There is no place in our society, including within higher education (HE), for any form of sexual harassment or violence. HE providers have clear responsibilities, including under the Equality Act (2010), and should have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law to investigate and swiftly address reports of sexual misconduct.

All students should be able to thrive in HE, free from barriers to both their academic and personal development. The government expects providers to address barriers preventing students from having a positive experience, and to ensure they have appropriate support in place.

The government is working closely with Universities UK (UUK) and the Office for Students to support work to address sexual harassment in HE, including implementing the recommendations of the UUK Taskforce on sexual violence and harassment, published in 2016.

Since these recommendations were published, further guidance has been published on sexual misconduct in HE. This includes the Pinsent Masons guidelines on how to handle student misconduct which may constitute a criminal offence, and separate briefings from the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education on handling disciplinary procedures relating to sexual misconduct.

HE providers are autonomous institutions who have a duty of care to students, which includes all aspects of safeguarding and wellbeing. This is taken very seriously by providers. Providers will make decisions based on the needs of their student body, for example including support services for students facing issues relating to sexual violence and harassment. The UUK Taskforce clearly set out the need for providers to have clear care pathways and make it clear where students should be referred to within the university to access appropriate support.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Birds: Pest Control

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[277096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many licences his Department has issued to kill (a) cormorants and (b) goosanders in each of the last five years.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

The numbers of cormorant and goosander licences issued between 2014 and 2019 (to date) by Natural England on behalf of the Secretary of State are given in the table below. Individual licences are licences issued to an individual or angling club/fishery. An area based licence is one licence issued to a primary contact which covers multiple individuals amongst a group of fisheries within a defined catchment or area.

SPECIES	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019(TO DATE)
Cormorant (Individual)	409	456	450	435	429	106
Goosander (Individual)	31	35	29	29	29	9
Cormorant only (Area Based)	6	13	12	13	15	1

SPECIES	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019(TO DATE)
Licence)						
Goosander only (Area Based Licence)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant / Goosander (Area Based Licence)	1	4	4	4	4	0

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[277178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help farmers tackle the spread of bovine TB.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

We are pursuing a wide range of interventions as part of the Government's strategy to eradicate bovine TB in England by 2038, including strengthening cattle testing and movement controls, licensing badger control, and promoting biosecurity on farms to help farmers prevent the spread of Bovine TB. Sir Charles Godfray's independent review (published in November 2018) is an important contribution that will inform next steps in the strategy.

In my Written Ministerial Statement of 20 June 2019, I announced plans to reinforce TB testing in the High Risk Area, invited applications for a third round of the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme and confirmed the licensing and authorisation by Natural England of three supplementary badger control areas for 2019.

Our partnerships with other organisations have enabled the development of toolkits that support farmers to understand their role in the prevention and eradication of the disease, including the TB Hub, the iBTB website and the TB Advisory Service.

■ Dogs: Smuggling

Alex Norris:

[\[277278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 May 2019 to Question 257548, what further collaboration his Department is planning with (a) the Animal and Plant Health Agency and (b) Border Force following that meeting with the Immigration Minister.

David Rutley:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), as an executive agency of Defra, delivers Defra's animal health and welfare and plant health policy, including in the area of illegal dog imports, which was discussed at the Ministerial meeting in question. APHA and Defra colleagues are in continual communication about how to best shape and deliver this important policy area.

Regarding further collaboration between Defra and Border Force, we are taking forward our work to disrupt illegal imports of dogs as part of a wider refresh of our engagement at points of entry. Specifically, this includes APHA working more closely with Border Force to further improve operational processes at port, as well as exploring options for more mutual sharing of intelligence and intelligence led work.

■ Fish**Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[277097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of (a) cormorants and (b) herons on immature fish in English river systems.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

The overall impact on immature fish is not assessed at a national level.

However, in granting licences to control protected birds Natural England consider the evidence of damage provided by the applicant (for example the impact on immature fish) as well as the conservation status of the species.

Additionally, the Environment Agency have funded advisory posts to support affected fisheries using income from fishing licence sales. The current arrangement is part of the angling services contract awarded to the Angling Trust which pays for three posts that provide specialist management advice to angling clubs and fisheries owners impacted by cormorants and other fish predators .

■ Flowers: Conservation**Mr Steve Baker:**[\[277176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage wildflower meadows throughout the country.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

We are taking action to encourage wildflower meadows by managing designated sites, providing incentives for habitat management and creation, and forging strong partnerships with landowners, communities and conservation bodies.

Our agri-environment schemes provide incentives for creation and management of wildlife-rich habitat, including meadows. Since 2011, we have initiated creation of over 130,000 hectares of wildlife rich habitat, including wildflower meadows. Our new Environmental Land Management scheme will reward farmers and land managers for delivering environmental outcomes such as conserving and restoring such habitats.

Our Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) provide protection for approximately two thirds of the total extent of 110,000 ha of semi-natural grassland Priority Habitat in England. Natural England's 2018-19 SSSI designation programme identifies a further 12 sites containing important wildflower-rich grasslands. The 25 Year Environment Plan commits us to restoring 75% of SSSI areas to good condition.

We work with partners to support the recovery of threatened species and their habitats. For example, Natural England are working with landowners and conservation organisations on the Back from the Brink programme including on the 'Limestone's Living Legacies' project, restoring a network of limestone grassland sites in the West Midlands.

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[277177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the contribution of wildflower meadows to the success of the various bee populations in the UK.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Wildflowers provide pollen and nectar resources essential for sustaining wild and honey bees. Wildflower meadows therefore provide vital habitats for bee populations.

Published scientific research has established that range contractions in many of our bee species are linked to the loss of species-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows. It also found that bee populations are more diverse on farms where wildflowers are sown or in landscapes with greater densities of wildflower meadows and other species-rich habitats.

We also know that when we put wildflowers back, bees respond. Landscape-scale studies of wild bumblebee populations in farmed landscapes, led by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and part-funded by Defra, revealed that providing flower-rich habitat enhances the long-term survival of bumblebee families.

Through our programme of agri-environment monitoring, we are currently evaluating how sowing wildflowers on farms is supporting bee populations.

■ Salmon

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[\[277098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of salmon stocks in English rivers.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Defra undertakes annual assessments of salmon and sea trout stocks for England and Wales. These assessments are conducted by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science.

The annual assessments, including the most recent for 2018, are published on GOV.UK. Which can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-of-salmon-stocks-and-fisheries-in-england-and-wales-in-2018>

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Neil O'Brien: [\[277295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with reference to the oral evidence from the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Exiting the European Union to the Committee on Exiting the European Union of 4 September 2018, if he will list the 300 cross-government workstreams on the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Neil O'Brien: [\[277296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with reference to the oral evidence from the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Exiting the European Union to the Committee on Exiting the European Union of 4 September 2018, at the point where they were last assessed, how many cross-departmental workstreams on the UK leaving the EU without a deal were rated as (a) red, (b) red/amber, (c) amber, (d) amber/green and (e) green.

James Cleverly:

The Government has over 300 work streams looking at specific no deal plans across a range of sectors and these are well advanced. There is still some work to be done but departments are making sensible decisions about prioritisation.

The underlying detail for each workstream, including any assessment of those programmes, is exceptionally sensitive. If workstreams - or the underlying data - were made public, both our negotiating position and our ability to manage delivery across the programme would be significantly damaged.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Ahmed Mansoor

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[275651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Emirati counterpart to ensure that Ahmed Mansoor's prison conditions comply with internationally agreed minimum standards.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The case of Ahmed Mansoor was raised by my officials with senior Emirati officials in the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The UK urges all countries to comply with their human rights obligations. When we have concerns in this regard, we raise those concerns at senior level levels with foreign governments.

■ Iran: Minority Groups

Tom Brake:

[\[275647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on (a) reports that the Public Places Supervision Office is seeking to close Baha'i-owned businesses in Iran and (b) the targeting of other minority communities in that country.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We are aware of reports indicating that Baha'i owned businesses are being targeted for closure, including reports of the attempted closure of a care centre in Karaj, Iran. We remain concerned about the continued harassment and mistreatment that the Baha'i and other minority groups face.

We support the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran's assessment that discrimination against the Baha'is in Iran is legally sanctioned by a lack of constitutional recognition and the absence of other legal protections for adherents of this faith. We regularly call upon Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to protect freedom of religion or belief.

■ Sri Lanka: Politics and Government

Ruth Jones:

[\[275839\]](#)

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

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office makes regular assessments of the political situation in Sri Lanka, including through the British High Commission in Colombo. Sri Lanka is a close partner of the UK and a fellow Commonwealth member, and we welcome our joint reaffirmation of democratic values at the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting on 10 July.

We are concerned about the rise in anti-Muslim rhetoric since the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks. We have urged the Government of Sri Lanka to take stronger action to protect minorities and prevent extremists in all communities from inciting violence. The Minister for Asia and the Pacific most recently raised these concerns with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister in June.

We are also concerned about President Sirisena's statements reiterating his intention to end the country's moratorium on the death penalty, and issued a statement on 26 June. While we welcome the Supreme Court ruling on 5 July halting executions until October, we have made clear our continued concern, including about the implications for our cooperation on counter narcotics, counter terrorism and other areas of law enforcement. We will continue to encourage the Government of Sri Lanka to maintain its moratorium.

More broadly, the UK continues to believe that Sri Lanka's commitments to the UN Human Rights Council through Resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1 remain the best framework for establishing truth, justice and lasting reconciliation in Sri Lanka. We will continue to encourage and support Sri Lanka to deliver on these commitments.

■ **Tanzania: Non-governmental Organisations**

Alberto Costa: [\[275785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the treatment of NGOs by the Tanzanian Government.

Harriett Baldwin:

We are concerned about the treatment of Non-Governmental Organisations in Tanzania and increasing restrictions on the democratic space in which they operate. The UK Government is working closely with civil society, including through the Department for International Development Accountability in Tanzania programme, to strengthen civil society and promote positive and constructive engagement with the Tanzanian authorities on difficult issues. I raised our concerns regarding the protection of civil and political rights with the Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Defending Media Freedom conference in London on 11 July 2019.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Anorexia: Research**

Paul Farrelly: [\[277123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for treating anorexia of the research published in July 2019 in the journal Nature Genetics entitled genome-wide association study identifies eight risk loci and implicates metabo-psychiatric origins for anorexia nervosa.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Department has not made any assessment of this research. However, its findings are a useful addition to the evidence base and should be considered by clinicians and other researchers alongside the rest of the evidence on the management of anorexia nervosa.

■ **Autism and Learning Disability: Community Care and Housing**

Barbara Keeley: [\[277154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 18 of the NHS Long Term Plan implementation framework, how much additional funding he plans to allocate to support the development of (a) new housing options and (b) suitable accommodation in the community for (i) autistic people and (ii) people with learning disabilities.

Caroline Dinenage:

In addition to ongoing capital subsidy by both Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department of Health and Social Care, to support the new supply of supported housing, NHS England has committed to invest £100 million of capital funding to support people with a learning disability and autism to live in the community from 2016 to 2021.

Further funding to support housing development relating to the Learning Disability programme from April 2021 will be subject to the capital spending review.

■ Autism and Learning Disability: Health Services**Barbara Keeley:**[\[277152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Long-Term Plan implementation framework, what the timeframe is for local areas to produce system plans in relation to services for (a) autistic people and (b) people with learning disabilities.

Barbara Keeley:[\[277153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 17 of the NHS Long-Term Plan implementation framework, what criteria will be used to calculate the local area share of the required further reduction of inpatient usage and beds for (a) autistic people and (b) people with learning disabilities.

Caroline Dinenage:

Publication of the Implementation Framework begins the process of strategic system planning. System plans for delivery through to 2023/24 are required, with an initial submission in September 2019 and a final submission to follow by mid November 2019. Plans should fully align across the organisations within each system so that they can subsequently be translated into organisational plans for 2020/21, which will be required in early 2020.

The NHS Long Term Plan states that by March 2023/24, inpatient provision will have reduced to less than half of 2015 levels and, for every one million adults, there will be no more than 30 people with a learning disability and/or autism cared for in an inpatient unit. For children and young people, no more than 12 to 15 children with a learning disability, autism or both per million, will be cared for in an inpatient facility.

At a local level, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are expected to reduce inappropriate hospitalisation of people with a learning disability, autism or both to meet these targets. The targets are for people for a learning disability, autism or both as a whole and do not differentiate between individual groups of patients (other than by age). The target rates expressed in the Long Term Plan are based on the Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates for 2017 and translate into different inpatient counts in each CCG dependent on the size of the local population.

Areas with larger populations will therefore have higher inpatient targets than those with smaller populations.

■ Cannabis: Analgesics

Andrew Percy: [\[275737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of using medicinal cannabis for pain relief.

Andrew Percy: [\[275738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using medicinal cannabis to treat Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Seema Kennedy:

An initial impact assessment Rescheduling of cannabis-based products for medicinal use under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 was published alongside The Misuse of Drugs (Amendments) (Cannabis and Licence Fees) (England, Wales and Scotland) Regulations 2018. A copy of this impact assessment is available at the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/1055/impacts>

This set out the approach that the Government proposed to take in assessing the costs and benefits of the change in the law at a population level, with regard to the rescheduling of CBPM. The analysis is limited to the five medical conditions where there is most evidence. These five conditions are multiple sclerosis – pain or muscle spasticity; chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting; severe treatment-resistant epilepsy in children - specifically Dravet Syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome only; chronic pain in adults and appetite and weight loss associated with HIV/AIDS.

To further the evidence-base, the National Institute for Health Research has issued two calls for research in this area and is working with the industry and researchers to ensure that the evidence is developed in a way that will inform decisions on public funding. This research will be open to all good quality proposals covering any indication, including pain and other disorders unresponsive to existing treatments.

■ Cannabis: Armed Forces

Frank Field: [\[275687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government taking to expedite the availability of medicinal cannabis for soldiers suffering from PTSD.

Seema Kennedy:

The law was changed on 1 November 2018 to allow clinicians on the General Medical Council's Specialist Register to prescribe cannabis-based products for medicinal use (CBPM), where it is clinically appropriate and in the best interest of patients. Whilst the law does not restrict the conditions for which these products may be prescribed, interim guidance has been issued by the Royal College of Physicians, British Paediatric Neurology Association and Association of British Neurologists. The

use of medicinal cannabis to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is not considered, as the interim guidance focuses only on areas where the evidence base is most developed.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has been commissioned to develop updated clinical guidelines on the prescribing of CBPM, the scope of which is limited to the management of chronic pain, intractable nausea and vomiting, spasticity and severe treatment-resistant epilepsy, areas where the evidence base is most developed. The guidelines will be published by October 2019. It will be based on the best available international evidence and will have been produced using NICE's world-renowned process for identifying and assessing relevant studies and delivering such guidance. NICE is expected to consult on the draft guidance between 23 July – 20 August 2019. This guidance will be routinely updated to take account of emerging evidence.

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■ Chronic Illnesses: Telemedicine

Barbara Keeley:

[277155]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 27 of the NHS Long-Term Plan implementation framework, what proportion of patients with a long-term condition do not have access to a smartphone; and what funding he plans to allocate to increase digital connectivity among those people to enable them to access the NHS App.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[277156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page six of the NHS Long Term Plan implementation framework, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of digital connectivity among (a) older and (b) disabled people, and what steps he is taking to increase the number of those people that have access to new digital NHS services.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

Information on the proportion of patients with a long-term condition without access to a smart phone is not routinely collected. We are committed to ensuring that all those using the National Health Service have fair and equitable access to high quality, effective healthcare services that are responsive to all patients' needs.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets a clear directive to offer digital first options for the provision of health and care to meet user needs and create a sustainable health and care system. We will continue to offer people choice in how they access NHS services.

Our mission is to empower people to participate in their health and care using digital services that meet their needs, target prevention and offer a personalised experience.

Whilst interaction with many health and care services will shift to digital over the coming years, this shift will not be obligatory for people who are unable or unwilling to do so. As more people move to digital channels, the time of health professionals will be freed up to spend more time with people with greater needs.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Tom Watson:

[\[277128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many European Health Insurance Cards in circulation are issued to people under 16 years of age.

Tom Watson:

[\[277129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many claims were made for people under the age of 16 through the European Health Insurance Card scheme in the most 12 months for which data is available.

Stephen Hammond:

There are 4,644,621 valid European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) in circulation held by people who are under 16 years of age as at 17 July 2019.

For the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019, there were 21,204 EHIC claims and 331 Provisional Replacement Certificate claims entered on the system for people under the age of 16 at the time of the claim.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Neil Coyle: [\[275772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the Dean Street Clinic, GUM, is not permitting gay and bisexual men to take part in the PrEP impact trial.

Neil Coyle: [\[275773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that gay and bisexual men using Dean Street Clinic (GUM) have access to PrEP as part of the PrEP Impact trial.

Seema Kennedy:

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is not currently a routinely commissioned service, but is provided by the National Health Service through the three year PrEP Impact Trial. Participation in the trial is on a voluntary basis and it is for clinics and local authorities to decide whether they wish to take part.

Neil Coyle: [\[275774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to advertise extra places on the PrEP Impact trial to people who are at risk of HIV.

Seema Kennedy:

The pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial is managed by the Trial Sponsor. Recruitment to places in the Trial is managed locally by participating clinics. All information regarding the Trial, including the research clinics which are open to recruitment is available at the following link:

<https://www.prepimpacttrial.org.uk/>

Following funding from NHS England to pay for extra PrEP drug and research costs and the Secretary of State's announcement on 30 January that the number of places on the PrEP Impact Trial would be doubled to 26,000, expansion of the Trial is now underway across the country.

In London, boroughs have so far agreed to accept 60% of the total number of additional places available to them, which equates to over 4,000 extra places on the Trial. London local authority commissioners have been asked to confirm that they will accept the remaining 40% of additional places available to them by the end of August at the latest. Participation in the Trial is on a voluntary basis and it is for research clinics and local authorities to decide whether they wish to take part.

Neil Coyle: [\[275775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with local authorities in London on increasing access to the PrEP Impact trial.

Seema Kennedy:

The pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial is managed by the Trial Sponsor. Recruitment to places in the Trial is managed locally by participating clinics. All information regarding the Trial, including the research clinics which are open to recruitment is available at the following link:

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Lloyd Russell-Moyle:[\[276267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to find a long-term and sustainable funding package to ensure PrEP is available to all who require it.

Seema Kennedy:

The 36 month pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial is scheduled to continue until autumn 2020. Work is now starting to consider future commissioning for PrEP after the trial has ended, which includes consideration of funding options.

■ Influenza: Vaccination**Chris Green:**[\[275777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has committed to spend on campaigns to promote flu vaccination in 2019.

Seema Kennedy:

Public Health England is planning to spend £1,300,000 on a flu vaccination campaign to encourage eligible members of the public and health and social care workers to take up the free vaccine ahead of the winter season. The spend includes expenditure for advertising on television, radio, national and regional press, outdoor, digital, and printing, excluding VAT. Figures provided are provisional and need to be reconciled following the campaign's conclusion in November.

Flu marketing resources can be viewed at following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/34-stay-well-this-winter-resources>

■ Mental Health Services

Norman Lamb: [\[277125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve support for people with neurodevelopmental conditions.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is committed to supporting people with neurodevelopmental conditions to live well. We are currently reviewing the adult autism strategy and working with the Department of Education will be extending the scope of the strategy to include children. The refreshed strategy will be published by the end of the year. We are also working closely with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and their attention deficit hypersensitivity disorder (ADHD) Implementation Working Group to look at how the current NICE guidance and quality standard on ADHD are being implemented. This work includes looking to identify best practice and examples of innovation, which have improved outcomes for people with ADHD, so that these can be widely disseminated to commissioners to improve local practice. We are considering what actions can be taken to support those with other neurodevelopmental conditions.

■ NHS: Amazon

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[276567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's announcement that NHS health information will be made available through Amazon's Alexa, what steps he plans to take to ensure the privacy of patient data.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

No patient data is being shared with Amazon as part of this agreement. The collaboration with Amazon simply connects people to medical information that is already freely available through the National Health Service website. Use of Amazon Alexa is just an alternative mechanism for accessing that information.

The agreement signed between the Department and Amazon is clear that none of the data generated through voice search using Alexa will be shared with third parties; that it will not be used for selling products or making product recommendations to Amazon users; nor is it building any form of health profiles on Amazon customers.

■ Plastic Surgery: Advertising

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[277124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to bring forward legislative proposals for amending the regulation advertising for (a) aesthetic and (b) cosmetic treatments.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

The Department has no plans to bring forward legislative proposals for amending the regulation of advertising for aesthetic and cosmetic treatments.

The Government is committed to improving the safety of cosmetic procedures through better training for practitioners, and clear information so that people can make informed decisions about their care.

The Committee for Advertising Practice (CAP) publish codes and guidance for advertising of cosmetic procedures, including endorsements on social media, which are enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). The Department has been working with the CAP, the ASA and the Joint Council for Cosmetic Procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of existing safeguards and levels of industry compliance.

■ Public Health: Finance

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[276265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding will be provided to local authorities for public health in 2020-2021 if the Government's spending review is postponed.

Seema Kennedy:

2020/21 allocations to local authorities will be confirmed in due course.

Helen Hayes: [\[277233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the amount of funding which will be allocated to local authorities for public health in 2020-21 in the event that the spending review is postponed.

Seema Kennedy:

2020/21 allocations to local authorities for public health functions will be confirmed in due course.

■ Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[277235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2019 to Question 259358 on Medical Examinations: Sexual Offences, how many Sexual Assault Referral Centres there are in England; and whether those centres offer a forensic medical examination to victims of sexual assault in cases where that victim does not wish to report that assault to the police.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

There are 47 sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) in England. At the SARC, there is an offer of a forensic medical examination, if clinically appropriate to do so, available to all clients. If victims have not decided whether to involve the police, any forensic medical evidence collected will be stored at the SARC to allow the victim time to decide if they do want to report the assault.

■ Sexually Transmitted Infections

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[276266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase funding for sexual health services to tackle the increases in cases of syphilis and gonorrhoea in England.

Seema Kennedy:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Exeter (Rt. Hon Ben Bradshaw MP) on 8 May 2019 to Question [261463](#).

■ Smoking

Tom Pursglove: [\[276206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of Clinical Commissioning Groups do not allow varenicline and other stop smoking treatments to be prescribed to patients in primary care; and if he will make a statement.

Seema Kennedy:

NHS England has advised that, because this is a locally commissioned service, they do not hold this information centrally.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[276568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking reduce waiting times for routine operations.

Stephen Hammond:

Reducing elective care waiting times continues to be a high priority for the National Health Service. The NHS Long Term Plan sets out the NHS priorities and reiterates the focus on increasing the amount of planned surgery year-on-year, to cut long waits, and reduce the size of hospital waiting lists.

The Long Term Plan also reinforces the NHS commitment to offer choice, including the promise of choice at 26 weeks. This will be delivered as a full rollout over the next year of the planned NHS-managed choice process, which will systematically identify 26-week waiters and contact them to offer choice for treatment at an earlier date.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Anneliese Dodds: [\[277290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the criteria are for an investigation of an asylum seeker by Immigration Enforcement.

Caroline Nokes:

Immigration Enforcement do not have set criteria for investigating or taking any action on asylum seekers with an outstanding asylum claim, as they cannot be removed from the UK until a negative decision has been made on their asylum claim and they have exhausted their appeal rights.

■ **Asylum: Religion****Anneliese Dodds:**[\[277291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how his Department plans to evaluate the effectiveness of its specialist training on faith or belief-based asylum claims.

Caroline Nokes:

UK Visas and Immigration (UVKI) has an internal assurance process to assess the quality of asylum decisions and interviews and the application of policy that is used to evaluate the effectiveness of its specialist training on faith or belief-based asylum claims.

■ **Counter-terrorism****Afzal Khan:**[\[277293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2019 to Question HL16344, whether he plans to include the appointment of the Independent Reviewer of Prevent in the Schedule to the Public Appointments Order in Council 2016.

Afzal Khan:[\[277294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timetable is for the advertisement for the role of independent reviewer of prevent; and where it will be published.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Short term appointments of this nature are not usually included in the Schedule to the Public Appointments Order in Council. Best practice with regards to public appointments will be followed as outlined in the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments 2016.

Bearing in mind the timescale set out in legislation, the role of Independent Reviewer of Prevent is not being advertised. The Home Secretary will make the appointment, and Ministers have been considering potential candidates for the role of Reviewer with a view to announcing the name of the Reviewer, along with the agreed Terms of Reference, to Parliament when a decision has been made.

■ **Immigration: Windrush Generation****Dawn Butler:**[\[277132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Women of 11 July 2019, Official Report column 439, what

forms of documentation have been provided to each of the more than 6,400 applicants to the Windrush scheme.

Dawn Butler: [\[277134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will provide a breakdown of the type of documentation received by the 4,200 successful applications through the Windrush Scheme.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Secretary provides the Home Affairs Select Committee with monthly updates on the work of the department in connection with Windrush. This includes information on decisions made by the Taskforce under the Windrush Scheme. The correspondence can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/correspondence-on-the-work-of-the-home-office-windrush>

The published Windrush guidance confirms what documentation is provided to the applicant dependent on the individual's circumstance. The guidance can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807384/windrush-scheme-v3.0-ext.pdf

Dawn Butler: [\[277133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many outstanding Windrush scheme applications there are.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Secretary provides monthly updates on the work of the Windrush Taskforce to the Home Affairs Select Committee. The correspondence can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/correspondence-on-the-work-of-the-home-office-windrush>

It is intended that updates on the number of outstanding application will be provided in the future.

■ Intelligence Services

Mr David Davis: [\[275118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2019 to Question 268377 on Intelligence Services, what immediate and substantial mitigating actions were taken by MI5 to address the concerns raised.

Mr Ben Wallace:

I cannot discuss the sensitive details of the mitigating actions that MI5 have undertaken, as doing so could cause significant damage to national security.

As the Home Secretary said in his Written Ministerial Statement of 9 May, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner is satisfied that they are sufficient for him to continue lawfully to approve decisions to issue warrants to MI5.

■ Knife Crime Prevention Orders

Sarah Jones: [\[277272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to publish draft guidance on the use of Knife Crime Prevention Orders; when the consultation process on that guidance will begin; and for how long it will run.

Sarah Jones: [\[277273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with which stakeholders his Department is engaging to develop guidance on the proposed knife crime prevention orders.

Sarah Jones: [\[277274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the knife crime prevention order pilots will begin; how many pilots will be run; and in which local authorities those pilots will run.

Sarah Jones: [\[277275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the knife crime prevention order pilots will include orders on people under 18 years of age; and what criteria will be used to assess the success of those pilots.

Victoria Atkins:

We will publish draft guidance on the operation of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) for public consultation shortly.

During the public consultation period we will be specifically engaging with those who have an interest in the operation of KCPOs, including law enforcement, prosecuting authorities, adult and youth services, Youth Offending Teams and other organisations who have previously expressed an interest. The consultation will be open to all to submit a response and will be accessible on the gov.uk website.

Final guidance will need to be in place before the pilot scheme can commence. We will be announcing details of the locations for the pilot in due course. The pilot will include the potential for KCPOs, and interim KCPOs, to be applied for in respect of individuals aged under 18, as set out in the Offensive Weapons Act.

■ Offenders: Foreign Nationals

Philip Davies: [\[277301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many background checks on foreign offenders were requested by police, broken down by police force, in the most recent year for which information is available .

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Home Office does not hold the specific information requested.

The ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) carry out overseas criminal records checks on behalf of police forces. ACRO record the number of requests to and from both EU and non-EU countries.

These figures are published at:

https://www.acro.police.uk/acro_std.aspx?id=226

Philip Davies:**[277303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he has taken as a result of the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services report on police effectiveness in March 2018 which concluded that background checks were being missed on foreign national offenders; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The importance of submitting checks for overseas convictions is widely recognised and has been the focus of attention within the Home Office and with policing partners for some time. UK Policing has issued guidance to support forces in the management of Foreign National Offenders to increase the number of overseas conviction checks submitted. This guidance was supported by extensive outreach campaigns to educate officers.

Individual force performance is one of the issues reviewed regularly at senior levels within the Home Office Foreign Criminality Programme. This programme has driven a range of activity to improve engagement between Police and Immigration colleagues and drive up the incidence of police conducting criminality checks routinely in relation to the foreign nationals they encounter.

■ Personal Records: Databases**Stephen McPartland:****[276187]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to prevent the procurement of personal information by criminal organisations.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The lawful use of personal information in the United Kingdom is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/79 and the Data Protection Act which this Government passed in 2018, and overseen by the independent Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO carries out a wide programme of activity (such as investigation into reported data breaches and audits of organisations' processing) which helps to ensure that organisations meet their obligations with regard to protecting the personal information they hold from being misused or falling into criminal hands. It can also issue Enforcement Notices requiring organisations to take certain actions, and can impose fines of up to 4% of annual turnover or €20m (whichever is higher) for serious breaches of Data Protection.

The Government has strengthened the law enforcement response to cyber crime, including to disrupt and deter criminal efforts to gain personal information through hacking and other computer misuse offences. Through the National Cyber Security Programme (NCSP), the Home Office has invested over £200 million since 2010, in the law enforcement response to the cyber crime threat, and we continue to invest. In the last year we have seen the launch of specialist Cyber Crime Units in every local police force, supported by funding from Government. We continue to invest in improving the capabilities of the NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit (NCCU) and of the cyber teams in each of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) across England and Wales.

Through the Government's Cyber Aware programme we have also provided the public and small businesses with the latest advice on how to take simple steps that will protect them and their personal information from cyber crime.

We have launched a new three year programme led by the Home Office to tackle illicit use of the dark web. This will build on the ongoing investigative work of policing and intelligence agencies to disrupt and bring to justice those who use the anonymity of the Dark Web to trade in illegal goods and services, including personal data.

■ Religious Freedom: Egypt

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[277292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how his Department determines whether the treatment of non-religious people and other religious minorities in Egypt amounts to persecution.

Victoria Atkins:

We consider the country evidence, which is taken from a wide range of reliable sources, including: reputable media outlets; local, national and international organisations, including human rights organisations; and information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We then consider that alongside the legal and policy framework for considering asylum claims, which includes guidance for caseworkers on assessing claims based on religious persecution.

Each asylum claim is carefully considered on its individual facts and merits in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and European Convention on Human Rights

■ Sleeping Rough

Layla Moran:

[\[277279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 274615, on the Rough Sleeping Support Service (RSSS), how many cases have been referred to the RSSS from (a) the Home Office and (b) external bodies (i) in the last 12 months and (ii) since that programme's launch.

Layla Moran: [\[277280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 274618, on Rough Sleeping Support Service (RSSS), from which teams in his Department were staff assigned to the RSSS.

Layla Moran: [\[277281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 274618, on the Rough Sleeping Support Service (RSSS), how many status checks the RSSS team has conducted as part of its administrative duties since that programme's launch.

Layla Moran: [\[277282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 274618 on the Rough Sleeping Support Service, how many cases the Rough Sleeping Support Service has identified for prioritisation since that programme's launch.

Caroline Nokes:

The requested information on the number of cases referred to and prioritised by the Rough Sleeping Support Service (RSSS) and status checks conducted by the RSSS do not form part of the body of published official immigration statistics and we are unable to release unverified management information.

The team of up to five casework staff were assigned to the RSSS from within Immigration Enforcement.

■ Visas

David Hanson: [\[276516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for visitor visas from (a) US, (b) Russian, (c) Indian and (d) Chinese citizens were (i) granted and (ii) declined in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

Applications for visit visas are considered against Appendix V of the Immigration Rules and on a case by case basis. Detailed information on how UK Visas and Immigration makes decisions on visitor cases is published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visit-guidance>.

Information on total entry clearance visas (the majority of which are visitor visas) broken down by nationality and outcome (grants, refusals, withdrawals, lapsed) is published in the quarterly Immigration Statistics Visas volume 1 table vi_02_q at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2019-data-tables>.

Please note that the large majority of US nationals coming to the UK as visitors do not require an entry clearance visa, as shown in the Immigration Rules at (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor-rules>).

David Hanson: [276517]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time was for a decision on visitor visa application from (a) US, (b) Russian, (c) Indian and (d) Chinese citizens in each of the last five years.

Caroline Nokes:

Information on performance against service standards for UKVI international operations is published in the Migration transparency data, the latest publication of which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-operations-transparency-data-may-2019>.

These indicate that the large majority of straightforward non-settlement visas (the large majority of which are visitor visas), 98.7%, are completed within the service standard of 15 working days.

David Hanson: [276518]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what performance targets his Department has put in place for the time taken to make a decision on a visitor visa application form (a) US, (b) Russian, (c) Indian and (d) Chinese citizens.

Caroline Nokes:

Under our published customer service standards we aim to process straightforward non-settlement applications within 15 working days.

The information for the latest quarter available is published online.

Data on entry clearance visa processing times, including the percentage and number of visas that are processed within service standards, is published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data> (then listed by publication date under 'UK Visas & Immigration').

■ Visas: Ministers of Religion

Patrick Grady: [277208]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether men ordained as deacons in the Roman Catholic Church are Ministers of Religion for the purpose of applications under Tier 2 and Tier 5 of the immigration rules.

Caroline Nokes:

Paragraph 169 of the Immigration Rules defines the role of a Minister of Religion. Further detail can be found within our guidance products, including our guidance for Tier 2 and Tier 5 sponsors, which can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-2-or-5-worker-guidance-for-employers

■ Young Offenders

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[277190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the effect of adverse childhood experiences on (a) levels of criminality and (b) rates of youth offending.

Victoria Atkins:

The Serious Violence Strategy, published in April last year, sets out our assessment of the risk and protective factors which impact on an individual's likelihood of becoming involved in serious violence as a victim or perpetrator. The impact of adverse childhood experiences are highlighted within this context. The Strategy stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes of serious violence and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence. We are investing in early intervention through the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund and the longer term £200 million Youth Endowment Fund, to ensure those most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from crime and violence and lead positive lives.

Through the Police Transformation Fund, we have also awarded £6.87m to South Wales Police for three years from 2017/18 onwards to deliver the Early Action Together (EAT) project with all four police forces in Wales and a range of partners. The police are working in collaboration with Public Health Wales to develop and test a new approach to policing, which prevents and mitigates Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The project aims to prevent further crime from being committed and stop the generational cycle of offending by providing the right support early to vulnerable people, which in turn reduces demand on services such as policing and health.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group

Wes Streeting:

[\[276247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what engagement the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group has had with the (a) Attorney General's Office, (b) Cabinet Office, (c) Crown Prosecution Service, (d) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (e) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, (f) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; (g) Department for Education, (h) Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (i) Home Office, (j) Ministry of Justice, and (k) Department for Transport in the last 12 months.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group meets quarterly. Independent members of the Working Group work alongside the listed departments, representatives from the Muslim communities, independent experts, academics, and ex-officio members of the Working Group to tackle anti-Muslim hatred.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Mr Steve Reed:**[\[268565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 6 June 2019 to Question 259244 on Buildings: Insulation, whether the BS 8414 test of a High Pressure Laminate cladding system has been carried out; and if he will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 27 June 2019]: The Large scale BS 8414 test including Class B-s1,d0 High Pressure Laminate panels with stone wool insulation was carried out on the 11 July 2019 and the test report is now available online.

This was announced in the Written Minsiterial Statement on 18 July HCWS1757 that can be found here: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-07-18/HCWS1757/>.

■ Children: Day Care**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[277239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Department is taking to support local authorities to provide business rate relief to private childcare providers.

Rishi Sunak:

Since Budget 2016 the Government has introduced business rates measures in England worth more than £13 billion over the next five years. This includes switching the indexation of business rates from the retail price index to the consumer price index, representing a cut in rates to all ratepayers, including childcare providers, worth around £6 billion over the next five years. The Government has also doubled the threshold for 100 per cent small business rate relief meaning that over 675,000 businesses including many childcare providers are no longer subject to rates.

■ Green Belt: Walsall South**Valerie Vaz:**[\[277186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many planning applications on Green Belt land in (a) Walsall South constituency and (b) England were called in by the Secretary of State in each of the last 10 years.

Valerie Vaz:[\[277187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many planning applications on the Green Belt in (a) Walsall South constituency and (b) England were approved after referral to the National Planning Unit in each of the last 10 years.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 18 July 2019]: Over the last 10 years, the Secretary of State has not called-in any planning applications on Green Belt land in Walsall MBC.

We do not hold information on the number of planning applications on Green Belt land approved after referral to the Secretary of State.

Over the last 10 years, the following number of planning applications on Green Belt land in Walsall MBC were referred to the Secretary of State:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
4	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

To obtain accurate data for Green Belt applications in England over each of the last 10 years would involve a disproportionate amount of resource and would not be possible within a reasonable timescale.

■ Housing Infrastructure Fund: Essex

Priti Patel: [\[277184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to make a decision on Housing Infrastructure Fund bids relating to Essex.

Priti Patel: [\[277185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether Homes England has made an assessment of the Housing Infrastructure Fund bids relating to Essex; and if he will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

We have so far announced nine successful Forward Funding schemes, worth more than £1.3 billion, to unlock up to 76,000 homes. All remaining bids are in assessment. Local authorities will be notified of the outcome of their bids in the coming months.

■ Housing: Construction

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[277168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the environmental sustainability of residential properties smaller than 13 square metres constructed under permitted development rights.

Kit Malthouse:

New homes in England, whether granted permission on an application or through a permitted development right, are required to meet Building Regulations.

We announced in Written Ministerial Statement HCWS 1408 our intention to review permitted development rights for the conversion of buildings to residential use in respect of the quality standard of homes delivered.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[277169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for residential properties of less than 13 square metres in the provisions of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 is helping to drive up standards in the private and social rented sectors by putting an obligation on landlords to ensure that any rented residential properties are free of all hazards, including overcrowding, from which a risk of harm may arise to the health or safety of the tenant or another occupier of the property. This requirement applies from the outset and for the duration of the tenancy.

This Department has not made a specific assessment of the implications for properties that are smaller than 13 square metres in relation to the Homes Act. The courts will decide whether a property is fit for human habitation by considering the matters set out in section 10 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, which includes the 'overcrowding' hazard prescribed in the Housing Health and Safety (England) Regulations 2005. Each property is assessed on its own merits, and if a property is so small as to be hazardously overcrowded, tenants will have the right to take action in the courts for breach of contract on the grounds that the property is unfit for human habitation.

Government is also reviewing the hazards set out in the 2005 Regulations as part of the comprehensive review of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

■ Housing: Older People

Paul Farrelly:

[\[277120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of housing stock suitable for older people.

Kit Malthouse:

[Holding answer 18 July 2019]: The Department surveys the English housing stock in its annual English Housing Survey and uses this data to monitor the adequacy of housing suitable for older people. The last report for 2017-2018 reported on the housing stock, its condition and characteristics. Other reports include the "Adaptations and Accessibility report" and the "Housing for older people report".

■ Local Government Finance

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[277135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the 2020-21 Local Government Finance Settlement.

James Brokenshire:

I aim to publish the provisional local government finance settlement on or around 5 December and the final settlement no later than 31 January, in line with the recommendations of the Hudson Review. The Department will ensure the settlement timetable aligns with the timing of fiscal events and Spending Reviews.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[277136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the 2020-21 Local Government Finance Settlement will form part of a multi-year financial settlement.

James Brokenshire:

In 2016-17, local authorities were offered a multi-year settlement deal, which was accepted by 97 per cent of authorities in exchange for publishing efficiency plans, as the Government recognised that this can provide greater certainty of income over the medium term to support service delivery plans. The arrangements for the 2020-21 settlement will be subject to the timing and duration of the planned Spending Review.

Local Government Finance: St Helens**Conor McGinn:** [\[277214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the per capita funding for St Helens Council is in the current financial year.

Rishi Sunak:

The Department's preferred measure of local government funding is Core Spending Power (CSP). The Department does not publish CSP per capita, but CSP per dwelling is published on the Department's website:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/774223/Core_Spending_Power_Summary.xlsx

Prefabricated Housing**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[276545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the (a) cost, (b) environmental and (c) build-time benefits of modular housing build.

Kit Malthouse:

My Department has not carried out a comprehensive assessment on these issues.

Research into particular topics may include consideration of modern methods of construction if relevant to the subject of the research.

It is however well recognised that new technology and innovation has improved productivity, quality and choice across a range of sectors and we are keen to see the same happen in housing. The Government is aware of numerous industry reports which indicate that the use of Modern Methods Of Construction (MMC) in

housebuilding, including modular construction for, has the potential to deliver a range of benefits.

There is an opportunity for housebuilders to embrace MMC and take advantage of new technologies to deliver good quality new-build homes more quickly, with the potential to deliver more energy efficient homes to buyers, improve site efficiencies and reduce waste.

That is why the Housing White Paper specifically talks about specific measures to stimulate the growth of modern methods of construction, including modular construction and smart techniques. For instance, on top of providing financial support to builders, we are creating a pipeline of opportunities in the sector and have set up a MMC working group to look at addressing barriers to assurance, insurance and finance for MMC homes.

The group has been exploring a range of opportunities to increase confidence in homes manufactured using these methods to support the uptake of off-site manufacturing technologies across the housing market.

■ **Refuges: North West**

Conor McGinn:

[\[277215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of refuges for victims of domestic violence in (a) St Helens borough and (b) the North West.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Department does not hold centrally the availability of refuges for victims of domestic violence in St Helens borough and the North West.

We are currently consulting on the Future Delivery of Support to Victims and their Children in Accommodation-Based Domestic Abuse Services closing on 2 August. The proposals for a statutory duty will require local authorities to convene a Local Partnership Board. Local Partnership Boards will be responsible for robustly assessing need for support for victims and their children in safe accommodation, developing, agreeing and publishing an area-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy, ensuring local commissioning of support services is in line with this to meet the diverse support needs of victims and their children and report to central Government on progress.

It is our intention that the proposals for a statutory duty, subject to the outcome of the public consultation, will form part of the Domestic Abuse Bill at a later stage.

■ **Social Rented Housing: Pets**

Tom Brake:

[\[277609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Battersea Cats and Dogs Home report on Pet friendly properties, if his Department will issue guidance for local authorities on pets in social housing.

Kit Malthouse:

The circumstances in which pets may be kept is determined locally by landlords, taking account of the views of their tenants. The Department has no plans to issue guidance for local authorities on pets in social housing.

Tom Brake:[\[277610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Battersea Cats and Dogs Home report on Pet friendly properties, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefits of pet ownership for social housing tenants.

Kit Malthouse:

The Department has not made any assessment of the potential benefits of pet ownership for social housing tenants.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT■ **Brazil: Indigenous Peoples****Fiona Bruce:**[\[277312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what policies his Department has on the provision of funding for the low income indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin in Brazil.

Harriett Baldwin:

The UK Government is working with Brazil to help ensure it continues to protect the Amazon and have invested nearly £120 million through the International Climate Fund on projects to limit deforestation, support indigenous people and other forest communities, prevent forest fires and implement the Forest Code in the Amazon, Atlantic Forest and Cerrado biomes.

The UK Embassy in Brazil frequently engages with the Brazilian Government on a number of issues including environment, human rights and development. We have been having positive discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Human Rights, Foreign Affairs, Brazilian Co-operation Agency (ABC) among others on our policies and programmes.

DFID does not give direct funding to Brazil, focussing instead on a long-term development partnership with Brazil to deliver the Global Goals internationally.

■ **Yemen: Food****Keith Vaz:**[\[276148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of food consumed in Yemen has been imported in each year since 2015.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Yemen relies on imports to meet 90% of its basic needs like food and fuel. Before the conflict, an estimated 80% of these imports entered Yemen through the critical Red Sea ports of Hodeidah and Saleef.

We are unable to provide a more direct response given the difficulty of obtaining specific data from Yemen.

We welcome the redeployment of Houthi forces away from these ports. It is vital that imports continue to flow into Hodeidah and Saleef and that vital onward supply routes remain open; both sides must facilitate the unhindered flow of essential supplies throughout the country.

Keith Vaz:[\[276149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of UK aid to Yemen has been spent on imports of food in each year since 2015.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The World Food Programme (WFP) is playing a vital role in Yemen, delivering food aid to millions of those in need across the country. We are providing WFP with £35 million in support this financial year (2019/20) and provided £35 million last financial year (2018/19). This support has been used exclusively to provide cash and vouchers to vulnerable people to buy food in local markets, and as such 0% of UK Aid has been spent on food imports over the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years.

In the 2017/18 financial year, the UK spent £65 million on imported food, vouchers and nutritional assistance through WFP, approximately 32% of our overall funding over the period.

Over the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17, the UK spent £10 million on imported food through WFP, approximately 5% of our overall funding over the period.

■ Yemen: International Assistance**Keith Vaz:**[\[275675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps is he taking to prevent the interruption of road-borne humanitarian aid reaching areas in need in Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK remains extremely concerned by constrained humanitarian access within Yemen, including road blockages such as the ongoing closure of the direct Hodeidah to Sana'a road and recent insecurity causing disruption to Aden to Sana'a routes.

We regularly raise obstructions to humanitarian access with all parties, including at the highest levels. The UK also calls on all parties to comply with the UN Security Council Resolution 2451 and support the unhindered flow of humanitarian supplies across Yemen.

UK aid is also supporting the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) to improve humanitarian and commercial access across the country.

Keith Vaz:

[\[276145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many aid trucks have been prevented from accessing areas in need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen since 2015.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK remains extremely concerned by constrained humanitarian access within Yemen. We do not hold comprehensive data on the exact number of aid trucks being prevented from accessing areas in need of humanitarian assistance, however the UN has reported that four million Yemenis in need of humanitarian assistance were affected by the interruption of services or delays in delivery in April and May this year.

Administrative restrictions imposed on humanitarian agencies by both parties remain a principal driver of access constraints. This includes recent delays enforced by Houthi authorities on aid trucks at the border between Government of Yemen and Houthi controlled areas.

We regularly raise obstructions to humanitarian access with all parties, including at the highest levels. The UK also calls on all parties to comply with the UN Security Council Resolution 2451 and support the unhindered flow of humanitarian supplies across Yemen.

Keith Vaz:

[\[276146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate he has made of the number of aid workers operating on (a) on UK funded and (b) non-UK funded missions in Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

DFID does not collect or verify data on the number of international aid workers in each country.

However, in line with the current ceiling on international UN Country Team workers (set by UN Department of Safety and Security), we understand that the number of UN international aid workers currently in Yemen is around 250.

■ Yemen: Overseas Aid

Keith Vaz:

[\[276147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate he has made of the cost to his Department of demurrage and related operational expenses in Yemen since 2015.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Administrative costs, including demurrage and related operational costs - as well as rent, travel, asset purchase and maintenance and other similar costs - are set at individually agreed rates with our partners so that they have the means to deliver life-saving aid across Yemen.

These individually agreed administrative costs ranged between £2,678 (3.11% of overall partner spend) and £4,789,341 (15.96% of overall partner spend) for each of our partners last financial year (2018/19).

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Manufacturing Industries****Andrea Leadsom:**[\[277189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK's (a) automotive and (b) aerospace sectors is able to take advantage of global trading opportunities when the UK leaves the EU on 31 October 2019.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade is working to strengthen the UK's automotive and aerospace sectors as we leave the EU. 2018 automotive exports were over £44bn and aerospace over £34bn, showing that international demand remains strong. We regularly showcase our world leading aerospace and automotive technologies, e.g. at the Paris Air Show in June 2019, and Frankfurt Motor Show in September 2019.

We are building on the strategy outlined in the automotive and aerospace sector deals announced last year. This includes attracting R&D investment to address the Industrial Strategy Future of Mobility Grand Challenge through the Faraday Battery and Future Flight Challenge Funds.

JUSTICE■ **Offences Against Children: Compensation****Andrew Griffiths:**[\[268452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2019 to Question 266816 on Offences against Children: Compensation, what estimate his Department has made of the number of private prosecutions brought by victims of child sexual abuse in the week commencing 2 January 2017.

Edward Argar:

Centrally held information does not identify whether or not prosecutions were brought forward privately by victims of child sex abuse. To identify whether the relevant cases

would require manual searching of court records, which would be of disproportionate cost.

Officials within my Department would be happy to extend an invitation to my Honourable Friend, the Member for Burton and Uttoxeter, to discuss what data is available and its limitations.

■ Prisoners' Release: Children

Bambos Charalambous: [\[277249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children under the age of 18 have been released from custody without accommodation in the last 12 months.

Edward Argar:

This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost, as there would be a need to check individual records of young people released from custody in 2018/19.

The first step to reducing reoffending is making sure everyone leaving prison has access to secure and stable accommodation, and we work closely with local authorities to support offenders with their resettlement on release.

■ Prisoners: Training

Richard Burgon: [\[277220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2019 to Question 273806 on Prisoners: Training, what courses are listed on that HMPPS Management Information System for each prison.

Robert Buckland:

The HMPPS Management Information System was introduced alongside the new education contracts in April this year, and its use is still being embedded across the prison estate. I will write to the Hon Member in Autumn with the information requested once a verified list of courses can be provided, and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

■ Prisoners: Veterans

Dan Jarvis: [\[R\] \[276194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many former armed service personnel who have declared their membership of those services are serving a sentence in each prison in Yorkshire.

Edward Argar:

The Ministry of Justice published Experimental Statistics in October 2018, which estimated the numbers of former service personnel in the prison population. The department is due to release the next estimate in October 2019.

This new analysis indicated that as at 30 June 2018, 2032 prisoners had declared as 'ex-service personnel' when they were first received into custody between January

2015 and June 2018. The attached table shows the number of ex-service personnel serving a prison sentence in all prisons in Yorkshire as at 30 June 2018.

The Ministry of Justice is committed to ensuring that those who have served in the Armed Forces and who find themselves in the Criminal Justice System are able to access support, whether they are serving their sentence in custody or in the community.

Attachments:

1. Table for 276194 [Table - PQ 276194 - Armed Forces in Yorkshire.xlsx]

■ **Probate**

Richard Burgon: [\[276238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the average time taken by the Probate Service to complete a grant of probate application in each in of the last four quarters.

Paul Maynard:

Official statistics are not published on the average length of time from receipt of the application to the issue of a grant of probate. Internal management information, which is not subject to the rigorous quality assurance processes of official statistics, has been used to show the following average time from receipt of an application to a grant being issued:

QUARTER	AVERAGE WEEKS TO GRANT ISSUED
July 2018 to September 2018	3
October 2018 to December 2018	3
January 2019 to March 2019	2
April 2019 to June 2019	6

These figures do not include cases which are waiting for a grant to be issued. The data from April to June 2019 has been extracted from the HMCTS Reform Core Case Data system, which is a new system in active development, and may not be directly comparable with figures for earlier periods. All figures, especially those for April 2019 to June 2019, are provisional and subject to revision.

Some grants are experiencing delays of between four and six weeks outside of our targets as a result of significant increases in work during March and April and some IT issues which have now been resolved. We have recruited more staff and are now issuing in excess of 1,000 grants a day that is bringing waiting times down further.

Priti Patel: [\[277181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the performance of the Probate Service in processing applications for probate in 2019; how he measures that performance; and how long it took on average to process a probate application in each of the last 24 months.

Priti Patel: [\[277182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he is taking steps to reduce the time taken to process applications for probate; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Maynard:

Official statistics are not published on the average length of time from receipt of the application to the issue of a grant of probate. Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) internal management information, which is not subject to the rigorous quality assurance processes of official statistics, has been used to show the following average times from receipt of an application to a grant being issued:

MONTH AND YEAR	AVERAGE WEEKS TO GRANT ISSUED
July 2017	3
August 2017	3
September 2017	3
October 2017	3
November 2017	3
December 2017	3
January 2018	3
February 2018	3
March 2018	3
April 2018	3
May 2018	3
June 2018	3
July 2018	3
August 2018	3
September 2018	3
October 2018	3
November 2018	3

MONTH AND YEAR	AVERAGE WEEKS TO GRANT ISSUED
December 2018	3
January 2019	2
February 2019	2
March 2019	3
April 2019	2
May 2019	6
June 2019	9

These figures do not include cases which are waiting for a grant to be issued. The data from April 2019 to June 2019 have been extracted from the HMCTS Reform Core Case Data system, which is a new system in active development, and may not be directly comparable with figures for earlier periods. All figures, especially those for April 2019 to June 2019, are provisional and subject to revision.

Some grants are experiencing delays of between four and six weeks outside of our targets as a result of significant increases in work during March and April and some technology issues which have now been resolved. We have recruited more staff and are now issuing in excess of 1,000 grants a day, which is bringing waiting times down further.

Urgent action has been taken to address the delays which have been experienced in the probate service. Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service is increasing staffing levels and further improving the digital service to help reduce waiting times.

■ Probate: Fees and Charges

Priti Patel:

[\[277183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made an assessment of the effect on the application-processing performance of the Probate Service of changes to the fees structure in 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Maynard:

Full consideration has been given to the effect of the proposed fees structure for grant of probate applications on receipts and subsequently on processing performance. We would expect an increase in the number of applications received prior to the introduction of the new fees, which would be partly offset by a decline in receipts post-introduction.

In March 2019 there was a significant increase of probate applications ahead of the anticipated implementation of the new fee structure but, as the fees were not introduced as planned, the high volume of receipts continued into April.

Urgent action has been taken to address the delays which have been experienced in the probate service. Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service is increasing staffing levels and further improving the digital service to help reduce waiting times.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Mary Glendon: [\[274534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the target waiting time is for benefit tribunals; and what the timeframe is for that target to be met.

Mary Glendon: [\[274535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 19 February to Question 221635, what the target staffing levels are for (a) medical members, (b) disability qualified members and (c) judges in the social security and child support jurisdiction.

Paul Maynard:

The Ministry of Justice has not set a target waiting time for benefit appeals to be heard in the Social Security and Child Support (SSCS) jurisdiction. This is because waiting times fluctuate geographically owing to a number of factors including venue capacity, the volumes of benefit decisions made locally, the complexity of the case and the availability of panel members. Furthermore, the listing of appeals, including consideration of whether a hearing should be expedited, is a function of the Tribunal's judiciary. There are also no targets for staffing levels for medical members, disability qualified members or judges in the SSCS jurisdiction. Levels are set based on forecast receipts to the SSCS jurisdiction, outstanding workload, and venue capacity.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is taking positive steps to reduce the waiting time for appeals to be heard in the SSCS jurisdiction. In 2018, 232 medical members and 118 disability-qualified members were additionally appointed to the SSCS jurisdiction and an extra 129 fee-paid judges have recently been appointed. The SSCS jurisdiction will also benefit from 100 salaried judges and 170 fee-paid judges being recruited across tribunals more widely. In addition, HMCTS is developing a new digital system with a view to enabling speedier processing of appeals and a better service for all parties to the proceedings. Case-management "triage" sessions are also being conducted, with the aim of reducing the number of cases that need to progress to an oral hearing.

■ Youth Custody

Richard Burgon: [\[277224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of children in custody were held in (a) Secure Children's Homes, (b) Secure Training Centres and (c) Young Offenders Institutions in each year since 2010.

Edward Argar:

The table below shows the average monthly youth custody population (under 18-year olds) by sector for the years ending 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2018, and the proportion of the total under 18 custodial population represented by each sector.

POPULATION BY SECTOR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Secure Children's Homes	167	165	166	142	129	101	108	107	106
Secure Training Centres	253	264	280	253	262	223	196	131	166
Young Offender Institutions	1,998	1,610	1,517	1,149	825	714	656	630	623
Total	2,418	2,040	1,963	1,544	1,216	1,037	960	868	894
Share of population by sector	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Secure Children's Homes	7%	8%	8%	9%	11%	10%	11%	12%	12%
Secure Training Centres	10%	13%	14%	16%	22%	21%	20%	15%	19%
Young Offender Institutions	83%	79%	77%	74%	68%	69%	68%	73%	70%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

TRANSPORT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Stephen Kerr:**[\[912039\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help ensure the provision of new rolling stock on the east coast main line.

Andrew Jones:

LNER's new Azuma trains entered service on their Hull and Leeds routes in May this year are due to launch on Edinburgh services from 1st August and will then be serving destinations North of Edinburgh by the end of the year.

These state-of-the-art trains, delivered as part of the government-funded Intercity Express Programme, have more seats, better legroom and will be more reliable.

The full fleet of 65 trains compared to 45 old trains will be in service from 2020 enabling additional services to be run increasing capacity further.

Maggie Throup:[\[912041\]](#)

What progress he has made on introducing a hybrid Bill to secure the powers to deliver phase 2b of High Speed Two; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

In 2018, the Government began engaging on the design of HS2 Phase 2b with local communities along the route, via the publication of the Working Draft Environmental Statement.

In June 2019, we published a Design Refinement Consultation which announced eleven possible changes to the Phase 2b route. These consultations represent significant milestones in preparing the HS2 Phase 2b hybrid Bill.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:[\[912043\]](#)

If he will allocate additional funding to improve roads outside the major road network and the strategic road network.

Michael Ellis:

The Department for Transport is committed to providing over £6.7 billion to local highway authorities in England, outside London, from 2015 to 2021 to help improve the condition of roads and reduce congestion. The funding includes a £296 million Pothole Action Fund and £420 million for highways maintenance and a congestion busting fund as announced in Budget 2018.

Stephen Lloyd:[\[912044\]](#)

What progress has been made on the proposed dualling of the A27 east of Lewes to Eastbourne.

Michael Ellis:

The Department is considering this proposal alongside the many others put forward for possible inclusion in the second Road Investment Strategy. We intend to announce our decisions towards the end of this year.

Mr Nigel Evans:[\[912045\]](#)

What progress he has made on helping to ensure that flights between the UK and Europe continue after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Grayling:

The UK and EU have both put in place measures to ensure that flights can continue in any EU Exit scenario. In a no deal scenario, the EU's adopted Regulation on connectivity gives UK airlines the right to fly to and from the EU from the day of exit until March 2020, allowing time to progress longer-term arrangements. The UK has stated we will reciprocate these rights for EU airlines. Both sides are committed to maintaining connectivity.

Sir Robert Syms:[\[912046\]](#)

What progress he has made on helping to ensure that flights between the UK and Europe continue after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Grayling:

The UK and EU have both put in place measures to ensure that flights can continue in any EU Exit scenario. In a no deal scenario, the EU's adopted Regulation on connectivity gives UK airlines the right to fly to and from the EU from the day of exit

until March 2020, allowing time to progress longer-term arrangements. The UK has stated we will reciprocate these rights for EU airlines. Both sides are committed to maintaining connectivity.

Vicky Ford:

[\[912048\]](#)

What progress he has made on opening new stations on the rail network.

Andrew Jones:

Since 2010, some 42 new stations have been opened across the rail network.

The Government supports proposals for new stations that help provide a solution to local traffic congestion or fulfill a new opportunity such as a housing development, business/retail park or airport.

Good progress is made on proposals that provide a robust business case, a sponsor and funding.

■ Electric Scooters

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[277108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of the use of e-scooters; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

Given that electric scooters, and other micromobility devices, are treated like any other motor vehicle under the Road Traffic Act, this means they are subject to laws requiring them to conform to technical standards and be used safely. This includes requirements for users to have insurance, driving licences, number plates, and helmets. At present, it is difficult for electric scooters to meet these requirements and as such they are illegal to use on a public road. Therefore, the Department has made no assessment of their prevalence. The Future of Mobility regulatory review will address the challenges of ensuring our transport infrastructure and regulation are fit for the future. This is a broad programme of work, and we expect to publish an initial consultation in autumn this year.

■ International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments

Mary Creagh:

[\[277151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2019 to Question 223798 on International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, what progress his Department has made on compliance with the Ballast Water Management Convention in order to accede to the Convention in Autumn 2019.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Good progress is being made on the development of UK regulations in order to accede to the Ballast Water Management Convention. This work was rescheduled in order to ensure that the legislation reflects the newest amendments to the

Convention which were accepted by the International Maritime Organization in April 2019.

We are committed to completing the regulations and acceding to the Convention in 2020.

■ Public Transport: Disability

Kevin Brennan:

[\[277116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he will take to ensure that the Access for All accessibility programme includes improving access to public transport for autistic passengers and other people with invisible disabilities.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We recently added 73 stations to the £300m Access for All programme, which provides accessible routes at stations. Network Rail will engage with local disability groups to ensure that designs meet the needs of all passengers.

£20m of this funding is available for smaller scale access improvements and we will welcome nominations for projects that provide improvements for non-visible disabilities, such as autism.

Direct awards and future franchise replacements will also require train operators to deliver staff disability training which includes awareness of non-visible disabilities.

■ Transport: National Policy Statements

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[277192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department last (a) undertook a review and (b) updated the National Policy Statement for National Networks; and whether he plans undertake a (i) review of and (ii) public consultation on the National Policy Statement for National Networks in the next parliamentary session.

Andrew Jones:

The Secretary of State may review and update the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN) at his discretion. The Department's focus is to ensure that the NPS NN, introduced in 2014, remains fit-for-purpose. At this time there are no ambitions or fixed timescales for a review of the NPS NN. Should the Secretary of State decide to amend or replace the NPS NN there will be a public consultation.

TREASURY

■ Child Benefit

Darren Jones:

[\[277264\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the equity of means-testing for child benefit in relation to couples in which one parent is entitled to child benefit and the other is not.

Elizabeth Truss:

The Government introduced the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) from January 2013 to ensure that support is targeted at those who need it most. It applies to anyone with an individual income over £50,000, who claims Child Benefit or whose partner claims it. The charge increases gradually for taxpayers with incomes between £50,000 and £60,000.

If total household income was taken into account, information on the incomes of everyone in each of the eight million households receiving Child Benefit would need to be collected and would effectively introduce a new means test. The Government's approach withdraws Child Benefit from those on higher incomes, whilst having no impact on the majority of claimants.

■ Children: Day Care**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[277237\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of funding for the 30 hours' childcare policy for three- and four-year-olds.

Elizabeth Truss:

The government recognizes how important an issue childcare is to families with young children. That is why we will be spending almost £6 billion a year on childcare support in 2019/20 – a record amount. This includes an initial allocation of around £3.5 billion for free childcare. Spending decisions beyond 2019/20 will be a matter for the Spending Review.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[277238\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of appropriateness of the level of business rates for private childcare providers; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

Business rates are an annual tax on non-domestic property, based on rateable value as assessed by the Valuation Office Agency.

Private childcare providers may be eligible for up to 100% Small Business Rate Relief.

The Government has taken repeated action to reduce the burden of business rates for all ratepayers, worth more than £13 billion over the next five years.

Local Authorities continue to have powers to offer business rates discounts beyond pre-defined reliefs at their discretion.

■ Help to Buy Scheme

Andrew Percy: [\[275733\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average age is of people who have taken up a Help to Buy ISA.

John Glen:

The average age of people who have taken up a Help to Buy: ISA is 26. Other key statistics on the Help to Buy ISA can be found here;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/798122/H2B_ISA_official_statistics_December_2018.pdf

■ Individual Savings Accounts

Andrew Percy: [\[275729\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have invested in a Lifetime ISA since its introduction.

John Glen:

The Lifetime ISA was introduced to help younger generations save both for their first home and later life. It has been available since April 2017. Individuals can subscribe up to £4,000 a year into a Lifetime ISA, receiving a 25% government bonus.

Since its introduction, monthly digital reporting to HMRC by Lifetime ISA providers indicate that over 330,000 people have invested in a Lifetime ISA.

■ Personal Savings

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[277117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will meet with (a) banks and (b) other financial institutions on recent reports of personal savings accounts with £170 billion and for which no interest is paid.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors, including banks and other financial institutions, as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

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

Interest rates on savings accounts are set by the institution providing the account. As this is a commercial decision, the Government does not seek to intervene. If a customer is not content with the interest rate they receive, Government encourages them to shop around to find the best savings account for their needs.

■ Roadchef: Pension Funds

Fiona Bruce: [\[277311\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will ensure the immediate release of Roadchef pension fund monies to Christine Slack and other former Roadchef employees; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The administration of the tax system is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs. It would not be appropriate for Treasury Ministers to become involved in the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

Fiona Bruce: [\[277314\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if HMRC will ensure the immediate release of Roadchef pension fund monies to Christine Slack and other former Roadchef employees; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The administration of the tax system is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs. It would not be appropriate for Treasury Ministers to become involved in the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

■ Soft Drinks: Taxation

Tom Watson: [\[277130\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend the soft drinks industry levy to milk replacement drinks containing sugar; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Jenrick:

Milk substitute drinks derived from plants are currently exempt from the soft drinks industry levy. At the time of the introduction of SDIL the Government committed to review this in 2020.

The government has no plans to extend SDIL at the present time.

Tom Watson: [\[277131\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to (a) extend the scope of the soft drinks industry levy to other products containing free sugars and (b) increase the rate of the levy.

Robert Jenrick:

The Government has no plans at this stage to extend the soft drinks industry levy beyond soft drinks. The Government has committed to review the exemption for sugary milk drinks in 2020.

■ VAT

Mr Alistair Carmichael:

[\[277127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has undertaken a recent assessment of the potential effects on businesses in the UK of leaving the EU VAT area.

Jesse Norman:

Leaving the EU without a negotiated settlement is not the Government's preferred outcome, but it is essential that the UK is prepared for all possible eventualities on customs, VAT and excise arrangements.

As part of the no deal preparations, HMRC have published guidance and technical notices for businesses and their advisors on customs, excise and VAT, as well as a collection of letters and guides.

HMRC have published a collection of impact assessments on GOV.UK which are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/customs-vat-and-excise-regulations-leaving-the-eu-with-no-deal#impact-assessments>

WALES

■ Wales Office: Social Media

Deidre Brock:

[\[276557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department has spent on social media advertising in each month since July 2017.

Kevin Foster:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has not spent any money on social media advertising since July 2017.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance: Sickle Cell Diseases

Diana Johnson:

[\[277141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many carers of people with (a) sickle cell disease and (b) sickle cell disease and (i) stroke, (ii) chronic kidney disease, (iii) end-stage renal disease and (iv) pulmonary hypertension received carer's allowance in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the annual cost to the public purse of providing that support in each of those groups is.

Justin Tomlinson:

As of November 2018, around 860,000 carers received Carer's Allowance. The Department is forecast to spend around £3bn in 2019/20 supporting these carers to provide support to people with a range of conditions, disabilities and illnesses.

The information requested on the number of Carer's Allowance claimants caring for people with multiple specific conditions is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Children: Maintenance

Martyn Day: [\[277219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time enforcement case managers are employed by the child maintenance service.

Will Quince:

Child Maintenance Service employs 104 full-time Enforcement Case Managers. Enforcement Case Managers are those caseworkers who do court action rather than administrative enforcement action or financial investigation.

For context the overall head count i.e. people (part-time or full-time) who are Enforcement Case Managers number 269. This equates to an overall resource, referred to as Full-time equivalent of 220.91.

This is correct as of 30th June 2019.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Termination of Employment

Peter Kyle: [\[277229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Office for National Statistics Public Sector Employment data, what assessment she has made of the effect on the performance of her Department of the loss of over 20,000 staff since 2013.

Will Quince:

Since 2013, through using a range of tools, we have improved the Department's efficiency without dropping our performance levels. Our latest published figures show that we:

- delivered the lowest unemployment rate since 1974, getting on average 1,000 people into work every day since 2010
- processed 78% of new claims within planned timescales and achieved customer satisfaction of 81%
- processed Universal Credit (UC) faster - UC Full Service claimants for households with new claims receiving full payment on time had increased to around 86% in February 2019

■ Disability

Norman Lamb: [\[277126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how the new cross-departmental strategy for disability will reflect the needs of people with neurodevelopmental conditions.

Justin Tomlinson:

On Tuesday 25 June the Government launched a new cross-government approach on disability which is guided by a vision that recognises the contributions that disabled people make and where disabled people can participate fully in society.

To drive forward this approach, government will establish a new cross-departmental disability team in the Cabinet Office and the Office for Disability Issues will be incorporated into the team. This move recognises that disabled people, including those with neurodevelopmental conditions, face barriers across a wide range of aspects of their lives and across the whole of the life course, and that coordinated cross-government action is therefore vital.

The new disability team in the Cabinet Office will sit in the new Equalities Hub alongside the Government Equalities Office and the Race Disparity Unit. Together they will be better equipped to drive meaningful progress on equality and to tackle intersectional issues.

The team will work closely with disabled people, disabled people's organisations and charities to take forward this new approach to disability, with their views and experiences at the forefront of any new policy.

■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing**Jo Stevens:****[277204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have received under-occupancy penalty charges in each year since the introduction of those charges.

Will Quince:

Figures on the number of households receiving Housing Benefit affected by the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy are publically available through the DWP Stat Xplore website:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/login.xhtml>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Figures on DWP Stat Xplore do not include claimants on Universal Credit with a Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy deduction, as this data is not currently available.

■ Personal Independence Payment**Jo Stevens:****[277206]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time taken was to process a claim for personal independence payment in the last 12 months for which information is available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The median clearance time from registration to DWP decision for Personal Independence Payment claims cleared under normal rules from 1st May 2018 – 30th April 2019, the latest 12-month period for which data is available is 100 calendar days, which is approximately 14 weeks. The median clearance time for claims decided in April 2019 was 13 weeks, down by over two thirds since July 2014.

Source: PIP ADS

Notes:

- The status of claims as 'normal rules' is shown as at the DWP decision. It is possible for claims to transition between normal/special rules during the course of the claimant journey.
- The 'Registration to DWP decision (end to end)' clearance time is measured as the average time between the date of registration of the claim and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria or failure to return the Part 2 form within the time limit).
- The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases (e.g. cases where the person has been hard to reach due to being in prison, hospital, failed to attend the assessment on numerous occasions etc.)
- Great Britain only.
- This is unpublished data. It should be used with caution and it may be subject to future revision.
- The median clearance time is rounded to the nearest whole day.

■ Social Security Benefits: Sickle Cell Diseases**Diana Johnson:**[\[277139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with sickle cell disease were in receipt of (a) personal independence payments and (b) employment support allowance or their universal credit equivalents in the most recent period for which data are available; and what the annual cost to the public purse of providing that support in each of those groups is.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested on the number of people with Sickle Cell Disease in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit (UC) and the cost to the public purse of providing support for claimants with Sickle Cell Disease for ESA and UC is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Information on health conditions of ESA claimants is only available by high level medical conditions, including Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism, is published on Stat-Xplore.

The latest data on PIP claims in payment can be which can be broken down by month from April 2013 to April 2019 and by disability which includes Sickle Cell Anaemia can be found on Stat-Xplore too: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The latest data on the PIP expenditure broken down by disability subgroup including Haemolytic disease, of which Sickle Cell Disease is one disease is in this category is published and can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741592/PIP-expenditure-by-medical-condition-2017-18.ods

Diana Johnson:

[277140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in receipt of (a) personal independence payment and (b) employment support allowance and their universal credit equivalents have sickle cell disease with (i) stroke,(ii) sickle chronic kidney disease, (iii) end-stage renal disease and (iv) pulmonary hypertension in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the annual cost to the public purse of providing that support in each of those groups is.

Justin Tomlinson:

With regard to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit (UC), the information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

With regards to PIP, we only record the main disabling condition for a claimant on analytical datasets and so cannot answer questions on combinations of conditions without incurring disproportionate cost.

Information on health conditions of ESA claimants is only available by high level medical conditions, including Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism, is published here:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Jo Stevens:

[277207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications for support under the special rules for terminal illness have been received by her Department in each year since the introduction of those rules.

Justin Tomlinson:

With regard to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the latest available data on PIP registrations (applications) split by whether the claim was registered under Normal Rules or Special Rules for The Terminally Ill each month from the introduction of PIP in April 2013 to January 2019, the latest available data can be found at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost for Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

However, the available statistics for those terminally ill people who were allocated to the Support Group of Employment and Support Allowance, and terminally ill people on Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance, can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

■ Universal Credit**Tulip Siddiq:****[277240]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of enabling childcare costs to be paid directly to providers through universal credit.

Will Quince:

The Government recently submitted its response to the Work and Pensions Select Committee's follow-up report into Universal Credit: Childcare which sets out an assessment of the position in relation to payments direct to childcare providers. The response will be published in due course.

Universal Credit is paid in a single monthly amount directly into people's bank accounts, giving them control over their own money and making the move into work easier.

The Government is committed to supporting parents with moving into work and, as part of this, we have increased the level of support for childcare costs from 70 per cent in legacy benefits to up to 85 per cent in Universal Credit. The Universal Credit childcare policy aligns with the wider government childcare offer, which includes free childcare hours and tax free childcare. This offer means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work.

Where upfront childcare costs or deposits may prevent a claimant from starting work, jobcentres will use the Flexible Support Fund to support the transition into work. When parents have good reason for late reporting of their childcare costs, the Department is piloting a more flexible approach to enable parents to be reimbursed at a later point.

Since February 2018, Universal Credit claimants have been able to upload digital copies of their childcare cost receipts or invoices through their online Universal Credit account.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Low Emission Zones: Finance

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[273467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding has been allocated to support ultra-low emission zones in England in the (a) current and (b) previous financial year.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 15 July 2019. The correct answer should have been:

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

London is the only city considering an Ultra Low Emission Zone. Oxford has proposed a Zero Emission Zone. Oxford City Council has received £50,000 for a feasibility study to consider measures to reduce NO₂ levels. It has also received £122,500 for city-wide communication programmes to support achievement of zero-emissions delivery freight, and £128,500 for testing of low cost Zephyr sensor packages to compare with current sensors and improve data.

Outside London, only Oxford City Council is considering the establishment of an ultra low emissions zone. Oxford City Council has received £50,000 for a feasibility study for a zone. It has also received £122,500 for city-wide communication programmes to support achievement of zero-emissions delivery freight, and £128,500 for testing of low cost Zephyr sensor packages to compare with current sensors and improve data.

JUSTICE

■ Wellingborough Prison: Contracts

Richard Burgon:

[\[273807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 21 May 2019 to Question 253599 on Glen Pava Prison and Wellingborough Prison: Contracts, on what date his Department plans to launch the mini-competition for the operation of the prison at Wellingborough.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 15 July 2019. The correct answer should have been:

Robert Buckland:

The number of people convicted for offences under s41 of the Dentistry Act 1984 (“Unregistered person carrying on the business of dentistry”) over the last 3 years was 2; 1 in each of 2016 and 2017. It is not possible to identify whether these offences were specific to teeth whitening in centrally held data on court proceedings.

We launched the mini-competition for the operation of the first new Resettlement Prison at Wellingborough on Friday 12 July 2019 and anticipate making the award to the successful operator in July 2020.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business Update

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility) (Kelly Tolhurst): [\[HCWS1759\]](#)

Today, I will publish the Government response to our consultation on Updating the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988, which set fire resistance requirements for cover materials and fillings used to make domestic upholstered furniture.

The review aimed to ensure that our legislative framework maintains fire safety for consumers, reflects technological advances in furniture manufacturing practices, and facilitates a reduction in the use of hazardous flame-retardant chemicals as a means of making furniture fire resistant.

The consultation sought views on proposals to amend the testing regime. It also sought views on proposals for clarifying and amending the scope of the regulations, strengthening the traceability requirements to bring furniture into line with other product sectors, updating labelling rules, and extending the time period for trading standards to institute legal proceedings.

The Government is committed to protecting consumers from all safety risks, but we will not compromise on fire safety. During the course of the review, to ensure the highest standards, we sought the views of Chief Scientific Advisors from relevant departments across government.

The Government will now develop a new approach to address the different sources and chemical risks posed by fire to upholstered furniture and furnishings. It will focus on safety outcomes [such as reduced risk of ignition, reduced risk of fire spread] and will be underpinned by a set of essential safety requirements which all upholstered furniture placed on the market must meet.

This approach is consistent with that taken for other consumer products. The [new] legislation will be supported by British Standards which will be developed by the British Standards Institution in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including industry, fire-safety experts and consumer representatives.

This new approach will continue to ensure that manufacturers place only safe products on the UK market. I will consult on the detail of this new approach in due course. In the meantime, the existing Regulations will continue to apply.

■ Legislative Update

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

[\[HCWS1737\]](#)

The Government has today published its response to the report of the Joint Committee on the Draft Registration of Overseas Entities Bill.

The draft Bill was published on 23 July 2018 to enable pre-legislative scrutiny. The Joint Committee formed for the purpose of scrutinising the draft Bill was established in February 2019 and published their report on 20 May 2019. The report was supportive of the Bill and its intentions, concluding that it is “timely, worthwhile, and, in large part, well drafted”. The Government welcomes the Committee’s report and thanks the Committee’s Chair and members for their detailed scrutiny of the draft Bill. The scrutiny process has been valuable and the Government has accepted a number of the Committee’s recommendations and will be giving serious consideration to others to ensure that the legislation is as effective as possible in tackling the use of UK property for money laundering purposes by improving the transparency of property ownership.

A copy of this Government response will be laid before both Houses.

DEFENCE

■ Cabinet Office Review of Consolidated Guidance

Secretary of State for Defence (Penny Mordaunt):

[\[HCWS1746\]](#)

On 20 May 2019, in response to an urgent question, I made a statement to Parliament on Ministry of Defence internal policy with regard to the receipt and sharing of intelligence related to detainees overseas. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Rt Hon David Lidington) is updating the House today. Sir Adrian Fulford, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, has now finalised his review of the Consolidated Guidance and has recommended its replacement with a new document: ‘The Principles Relating to the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas and the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees, a draft of which was provided to Government on 12 June 2019. The Ministry of Defence, along with other Government Departments, has considered these Principles, accepts them in full, and has begun work to update its internal guidance accordingly. The Principles and revised supporting internal guidance will be fully implemented by the end of the year.

■ Defence Fire and Rescue Project

Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr Tobias Ellwood):

[\[HCWS1758\]](#)

My right hon Friend the Minister of State in the House of Lords (Earl Howe) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am announcing the outcome of the Defence Fire and Rescue Project which has been examining potential improvements in how Fire and Rescue Services are provided to the Ministry of Defence, both in the United Kingdom and overseas.

In June 2018, I announced the Ministry of Defence's intention to award the Defence Fire and Rescue Project contract to Capita Business Services Limited and I can today confirm this to be the case. Following a competitive bidding process Capita's bid was deemed to deliver the best technical solution and the best value for money for Defence. The 12-year contract is worth £525 million and will mark a step change in capability for Defence's Fire and Rescue capability.

The project will deliver a range of benefits whilst sustaining our worldwide fire and rescue capability. These benefits include improved safety for firefighter personnel and those they protect as well as fire risk management for the Department. This will be achieved through the investment in new equipment, technology and training which the contract will enable to happen faster than it otherwise would. In addition, we expect the contract to deliver significant financial savings over the course of its lifespan; money which can be reinvested into other areas of the Defence budget.

I can assure Parliament that these proposed contractual arrangements with Capita have been subject to thorough scrutiny and due diligence processes conducted across Government, including in the Ministry of Defence, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury. These assurance processes included the financial sustainability of Capita and tested their technical expertise to deliver the contract in a sustainable and resilient manner. Safeguards are in place to ensure there is no break in service provision. Capita have experience in delivering Fire and Rescue service provision as they already operate the internationally recognised Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh.

Initially, around 560 MOD Civil Servants, mainly firefighting personnel, are expected to transfer under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations to Capita as the contract is implemented over the next few years. Fire station managers, their staff and Trade Union representatives of the civilian workforce have been consulted throughout the project and are being formally told of the contract award today. I would like to pay tribute to the work they have and will continue to undertake for Defence. The Royal Air Force and Royal Navy will continue to employ firefighters. Over time there will be a reduction in the number of firefighters in the Royal Air Force due to the introduction of new technology and there may be opportunities in the future for some roles becoming Sponsored Reserves.

I can confirm that existing fire and rescue services provided to the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston, the Defence Science and Technical Laboratory in Porton Down and at US visiting forces bases in the United Kingdom are unaffected by these changes. The Defence Fire Training and Development Centre at Manston will close in due course with training transferred to Capita's existing fire training facility at Moreton-in-Marsh. The award of this contract will enable the Ministry of Defence to vacate large elements of the Manston site which will be released to support economic development, potentially including housing, in the local area.

This has been a complex procurement with a delay in the award of the contract following a legal challenge from Serco Ltd, the other final bidder. We have now mutually agreed an out-of-court settlement of £10 million which provides better value for money for the tax payer than an uncertain and costly court case. I can confirm that the MOD's Accounting

Officer has commissioned an independent review to ensure we learn from this acquisition process. This will be led by Tony Poulter, a non-executive director at the Department for Transport. The findings of the review will be published after the summer.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Equality and listed events

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Jeremy Wright): [\[HCWS1751\]](#)

I have written today to the BBC, S4C, Ofcom and The International Paralympic Committee in a limited consultation on adding the Paralympic Games to the Listed Events Regime. I have also copied the letter to Channel 4 who currently hold the broadcasting rights for the next Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020, to other eligible Free To Air broadcasters, and to the Sport and Recreation Alliance.

The Broadcasting Act 1996 gives the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport discretion to designate sporting and other events of national interest as listed events. Once listed, broadcasting rights to such events must be offered to the main free-to-air terrestrial broadcasters (“qualifying broadcasters”) on fair and reasonable terms. Qualifying broadcasters are those which reach 95% coverage of UK viewers and at no additional cost to the viewer than the television licence fee. Broadcasters currently meeting these criteria include BBC1, BBC2, ITV1 and Channel 4.

The current list, compiled in 1998, consists of two categories of events:

- Group A, in which full live coverage must be offered to the qualifying broadcasters; and
- Group B, in which live coverage may be broadcast on subscription television as long as secondary coverage is offered to qualifying broadcasters.

Under section 97 of the Broadcasting Act 1996, the Secretary of State is able to amend the list providing that they have consulted with the statutory consultees. In my letter I have asked consultees to consider the following:

- whether, based on the guidance and criteria given, the Paralympic Games should be added to the list;
- whether the Paralympic Games should be listed under Group A or Group B of the list;
- other factors affecting the likely costs and benefits to the sport concerned, to the broadcasting industry and to viewers, as set out in the guidance on the criteria for listing; and
- any other factors relevant to the final decision.

While the Government does not wish to reopen the list of events for a full review, it is committed to supporting more equality in the coverage of sport on TV, and in particular, disability and women in sport. It is for this reason that I am considering whether to

exercise discretion to add the Paralympics to the list, and that I intend on holding a consultation later this year on adding women's sporting equivalent events to the regime that match the men's events.

I will inform the House of the outcome once I have discussed fully with statutory consultees.

■ **Statement of Strategic Priorities for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum, and postal services**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Jeremy Wright):
[\[HCWS1748\]](#)

I am today laying before Parliament the Government's draft Statement of Strategic Priorities for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum, and postal services.

The statement sets out the Government's strategic priorities and desired outcomes in a number of areas, including gigabit capable broadband deployment, 5G, spectrum management, the security and resilience of telecoms infrastructure, and furthering the interests of telecoms consumers.

The statement follows a statutory consultation that ran between 15 February and 27 March 2019. This elicited a number of responses from a large and diverse range of respondents, including industry, consumer bodies, local councils, and bodies representing rural interests. This has given the Government a wide variety of views to reflect upon. I would like to thank all respondents for taking the time and effort to respond.

I intend to designate the statement for the purposes of section 2A of the Communications Act 2003 after the end of the statutory "40-day period" (as defined in section 2C of the Act), unless either House of Parliament resolves not to approve it within that period.

■ **Update on Ofcom provision of information regulations**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Jeremy Wright):
[\[HCWS1750\]](#)

I would like to update the House on Ofcom's statutory duty to share information with Government at least 24 hours before publication, introduced under section 24A of the Communications Act 2003, inserted by the Digital Economy Act 2017. This early access to information from Ofcom is important in supporting the Government's wider policy responsibilities in safeguarding and improving the delivery of essential communications services on which consumers rely.

To commence the duty I must specify by regulations what categories of information will be exempt from this duty, following consultation with Ofcom. Our consultation with Ofcom has now concluded and I can inform the House of our intention to proceed with the implementation of the duty via a negative Statutory Instrument later in the Autumn.

The categories of information to be listed as exempt in these regulations include broadcasting content standards and broadcasting licensing enforcement. This is to

ensure that there can be no accusations or perceptions that the Government has had inappropriate prior knowledge or been involved in these functions. Corporate functions will also be excluded. Other types of information Ofcom proposes to publish, which fall outside of the above exemption regulations, will need to be shared with the Government at least 24 hours before publication by Ofcom once the duty comes into force, unless there are exceptional circumstances or prior agreement is reached.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be agreed between Ofcom, DCMS and BEIS, setting out processes to be followed for the provision of information by Ofcom. This MoU will provide the necessary assurances around who will have access to this information and when, as well as reinforcing the strong procedures government departments already have in place to handle sensitive information. Furthermore, additional arrangements for highly market sensitive information will see that such information only has to be shared once UK markets have closed (which may be less than 24 hours before publication), to provide necessary assurances to the companies Ofcom regulates.

The Government remains fully committed to Ofcom's independence. This duty to provide information will not influence Ofcom's investigations or decision making. Safeguards in the legislation legally prohibit representations being made to Ofcom before publication and also restricts with whom Ministers, and officials acting on their behalf, can share information before publication. For transparency, the consultation correspondence between DCMS and Ofcom will be published on GOV.UK.

EDUCATION

■ National Retraining Scheme Update

The Secretary of State for Education (Mr Damian Hinds):

[\[HCWS1736\]](#)

The world of work is transforming. In particular, automation is a key opportunity for the economy, creating new jobs and raising wages, but it could also bring significant changes to the economy. This means it is critical that we develop a National Retraining Scheme that helps prepare citizens for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation, and supports them to retrain into better jobs.

That is why we are developing the National Retraining Scheme through a unique partnership between the Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress and Government, which will keep the voices of workers and businesses at the heart of the service.

The scheme will initially focus on employed adults aged 24 and over, without a qualification at degree level and earning below a certain wage threshold that we are testing to focus on those earning low to medium wages. We are investing in this group of people first as they have comparatively less access to existing government support and are most in need of adapting their skills to take advantage of the opportunities the future changes to the economy will bring.

A key feature of the development of the scheme has been to start small, test, evaluate and scale-up. We are putting the needs of individuals and employers at the heart of the development of the scheme, conducting extensive user research to understand what they need from a National Retraining Scheme. We are also conducting a range of pilots investigating innovative approaches to overcoming barriers to training that adults face.

Today, I am pleased to announce the release of the first part of the National Retraining Scheme, 'Get help to retrain', to a small number of eligible adults in the Liverpool City Region. This digital service will help adults to understand their existing skills, explore alternative roles or occupations and find relevant training to unlock opportunities for a broad range of good jobs that could be within their reach. Get help to retrain will be rapidly expanded to more people and more areas throughout the testing phase before being made available to all eligible adults in England in 2020.

This is the first of a series of products that will make up the complete National Retraining Scheme and marks the first step of an adult's journey towards gaining the skills needed to secure a better job.

■ Student Loans Company Update

Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore):

[\[HCWS1753\]](#)

I am announcing that the Tailored Review of the Student Loans Company has been published today.

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is a non-profit making Government-owned organisation, which pays loans and grants to students, universities and colleges in the UK.

The principal aim of Tailored Reviews, which are carried out according to Cabinet Office guidance, is to ensure that public bodies remain fit for purpose, well governed and properly accountable for what they do. The full report can be read on gov.uk.

This Review involved consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including SLC staff, the Department of Education, the Devolved Administrations, UKGI and HMRC.

The Review found that the SLC is functioning relatively well, meeting the majority of its performance targets even with significant operational growth. However, it is facing some significant operational challenges, particularly from outdated legacy IT systems, a workforce experiencing high turnover and a complex policy commissioning cycle.

The SLC's own Transformation Programme seeks to address some of the issues and the Tailored Review provides additional and complementary recommendations.

The Department for Education is committed to working with the SLC and other stakeholders to develop and implement an action plan to take forward all 39 recommendations.

Copies of the Review will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ JUNE EU ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment (Dr Thérèse Coffey):
[\[HCWS1742\]](#)

I attended the EU Environment Council on 26 June in Luxembourg.

I wish to update the House on the matters discussed.

Adoption of Council Conclusions on a sustainable EU Chemicals Policy

The Presidency invited Member States to adopt its conclusions on the development of a 'non-toxic environment strategy', and to take action on other commitments made in the 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) and other previous texts, which have yet to be fulfilled.

Member States' interventions focused on the need to improve the safe management of chemicals, and ensuring the chemicals sector continues to adhere to EU standards, especially with regards to human health and the environment. Therefore, all were in agreement that the 'non-toxic environment strategy' should be published before the end of the 7th EAP in 2020. The majority of Member States also made it clear that they supported the need to ensure the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) was provided with sustainable and appropriate funding to allow it to continue to be the centre of knowledge on the sustainable management of chemicals, for the benefit of citizens and the environment.

I intervened to support the Council Conclusions and to welcome an EU-wide chemical strategy. This was an important opportunity to reinforce our shared ambition for high environmental standards and continued improvement in the safe management of chemicals. I therefore highlighted our willingness to continue to collaborate with Member States and the Commission, as well as other international partners, once we have left the EU, fully supporting calls to act on those commitments made in the 7th EAP. I also welcomed the gathering of data to better inform future decisions and to promote a risk-based approach to regulation, highlighting the need to minimise the impact on animals to achieve this aim.

Regulation on water reuse – General Approach

The Presidency invited Member States to agree the proposed General Approach on the regulation on water reuse.

The UK, along with a number of other Member States, supported the compromise text provided by the Presidency and its intention to promote waste water reuse across the EU for agricultural irrigation, within the context of future water scarcity and the circular economy. I made clear that harmonised rules could generate increased interest in reuse and stated that as drafted, the regulation offered a good degree of health and environmental protection. I also offered the forthcoming Finnish Presidency our support in the trilogue discussions to follow between the European Parliament, European Commission and European Council.

The Presidency concluded the General Approach had been agreed, although two Member States (Germany and Slovakia) abstained. The Finnish Presidency has stated that it would like to begin trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament in October.

Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) – exchange of views

The Council exchanged views on the 2019 EIR report and the actions needed to ensure better implementation of EU environment policies and legislation.

The Member States who intervened broadly welcomed the approach to the second cycle of the EIR, but agreed that additional work was required to identify workable solutions for closing environmental implementation gaps and addressing the root cause of poor implementation.

I took the opportunity to intervene, acknowledging the findings of the 2019 EIR and highlighting some of the additional actions we have taken since the publication of the report. This included the recent announcement of the designation of a further 41 Marine Conservation Zones; the publication of our Clean Air Strategy for England, which was commended by the World Health Organisation; and the forthcoming Environment Bill, which builds on the ambitions set out in our 25 year Environment Plan for England.

AOB items

The following items were also discussed under Any Other Business.

1. Clean Planet for all (Information from the Presidency)

Council noted the information from the Presidency regarding the Council debates held on the EU's long-term climate strategy, 'Clean Planet for all: strategic long-term vision for a climate neutral economy'. The Commission intervened to speak about the EU's position ahead of the United Nations Climate Action Summit in September, and its assessment that the EU will over-achieve its current 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target. Several Member States intervened with their reflections on the discussion on climate at the European Council on 20-21 June, and to comment on the timescales for securing agreement of the EU strategy by 2020. I intervened to note the Government's legislation for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, the Welsh Government's announcement of their intention to legislate next year for a 95% reduction by 2050, and the Scottish Government's amendment to their draft legislation to achieve a 2045 net-zero target. I confirmed that the UK supported the EU target of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, while also recognising the need for a just transition.

2. Draft Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (Presentation from the Commission)

Council noted the presentation from the Commission concerning the draft National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs). The Commission stated that they viewed these first drafts as positive overall, though there were areas for improvement.

3. Regulation on the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of CO₂ emissions for Shipping (Information from the Presidency)

Council noted the information from the Presidency concerning the Regulation on the monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of carbon dioxide emissions for shipping. Three Member States intervened to raise the importance of aligning the EU MRV Regulation with international reporting requirements.

4. Carbon pricing and aviation taxes (Information from the Netherlands delegation)

Council noted the information from the Netherlands delegation on their conference on carbon pricing and aviation taxes, held on 20-21 June in the Hague. The Member States which intervened on this AOB stated their support for the Netherlands' initiative.

5. Future Environment Action Programme (Information from the Austrian delegation)

Council noted the information from the Austrian delegation on the workshop held in Hainburg on 11 and 12 June. All Member States who intervened emphasised their support for an 8th EAP.

6. Clean Mobility and electromobility (Information from the Bulgarian delegation)

Council noted the information from the Bulgarian delegation about possible measures to support clean mobility and, in particular, electromobility. Those Member States who intervened, whilst supporting the need to look at options to address the rising carbon dioxide levels in Europe and the on-going problems around air quality, highlighted the challenges associated with electric vehicles and the uneven charging infrastructure across Europe.

7. Recent International Meetings – Triple COP; UNEA (Information from the Presidency)

Council noted the information from the Presidency with limited interventions.

8. G7 Environment Ministers Meeting (Information from the French delegation)

Council noted the information from the French delegation with limited interventions.

9. LIFE Regulation (Information from the Presidency)

Council noted the information from the Presidency with limited interventions.

10. Update on priorities from Finland on their upcoming presidency

Council noted the information from the Finnish delegation with limited interventions.

Additional engagement

In the margins of the Council, I met with a number of my counterparts from Member States to discuss on global environmental issues including our legislation for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and the UK's bid to host the twenty sixth Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in partnership with Italy under a UK Presidency.

■ The Global Resource Initiative taskforce

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment (Dr Thérèse Coffey): [\[HCWS1739\]](#)

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government committed to establishing the Global Resource Initiative (GRI) to identify actions across supply chains that will improve the sustainability of products and reduce deforestation and other environmental degradation.

The GRI Taskforce will put forward recommendations for how key sectors and stakeholders can best achieve the transformative change necessary to realise the GRI ambition on sustainable supply chains. Palm oil and cocoa are key commodities for which viable measures of sustainability already exist. The Taskforce will look at a wider range of key commodities and supply chain measures.

The GRI Taskforce is meeting for the first time today and will be chaired by Sir Ian Cheshire. Sir Ian will be joined by business and environmental leaders from organisations including Legal & General, McDonalds, Cargill, Tesco, the Green Finance Institute, WWF and NGO Forest Coalition.

The GRI presents an opportunity to transform the UK's approach to sustainable land use and support international commitments on climate and biodiversity, and the Sustainable Development Goals. It can create a model for change that inspires other countries and galvanises wider international action on nature and climate change. The Government anticipates a report in 2020 which can help shape global policies due to be agreed during 2020 and 2021.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ General Affairs Council, July 2019

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Mr Robin Walker): [\[HCWS1747\]](#)

Lord Callanan, Minister of State for Exiting the European Union, has made the following statement:

I will attend the General Affairs Council in Brussels on 18 July 2019 to represent the UK. Until we leave the European Union, we remain committed to fulfilling our rights and obligations as a full Member State and continue to act in good faith.

The provisional agenda includes:

Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 - 2027

The Finnish Presidency will present its plan for approaching the next phase of negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The intention is for Member States to reach an agreement on the negotiations by the end of the year.

Presentation of the priorities of the Finnish Presidency

Finland took up the EU Presidency from 1 July and will hold it until 31 December. The Presidency will deliver a presentation on its priorities which include: strengthening common values and the rule of law; making the EU more competitive and socially inclusive; strengthening the EU's position as a global leader in climate action; and protecting the security of citizens comprehensively.

Implementation of the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024

Ministers will discuss the implementation of the new EU Strategic Agenda 2019-24. The Strategic Agenda sets the overarching priorities for the next institutional cycle and it was adopted by the European Council on 20 June 2019. The priority areas are: protecting citizens and freedoms; developing the EU's economic base: the European model for the future; building a climate-neutral green, fair and inclusive future; and promoting Europe's interests and values in the world.

Commission communication on further strengthening the Rule of Law

The Commission will present its new communication on further strengthening the rule of law in the EU.

Rule of Law in Poland / Article 7 (1) TEU Reasoned Proposal

The Commission will provide a further update on the rule of law in Poland. This follows the recent judgment of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on Poland's Supreme Court law.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **British Council Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19**

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dr Andrew Murrison):
[\[HCWS1740\]](#)

Copies of the British Council's Annual Report and Accounts for the 2018-19 financial year have been placed in the libraries of both Houses.

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities and it makes a significant contribution to projecting British values overseas and generating soft power for the UK in return. In doing so it makes a lasting difference to the UK's security, prosperity and influence. The British Council is the world's leading cultural relations organisation, with a reach in 2018-19 of 791 million people. This included 80 million direct interactions, through a presence in over 100 countries.

The Council received £184m grant-in-aid from the FCO in 2018/19, which included additional funding to support their work in Europe.

The Report can also be found at the British Council's website: www.britishcouncil.org

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 Advisory Bodies - Annual Report 2018**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health, Inequalities and Suicide Prevention (Jackie Doyle-Price): [\[HCWS1752\]](#)

My Rt Hon Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lords) (Baroness Blackwood) has made the following written statement:

I have received the annual reports of the Human Medicines Regulations Advisory Bodies for 2018, which has been laid before Parliament today in accordance with the requirements of Part 2 Section 12 (4) of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012.

I am glad to acknowledge the valuable work done by the distinguished members of the Human Medicines Regulations advisory bodies and thank them for the time and effort dedicated in the public interest to this important work.

■ The regulation of physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs)

Minister of State for Health (Stephen Hammond): [\[HCWS1741\]](#)

Today I am pleased to announce that we have asked the General Medical Council (GMC) to regulate physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs) across the UK.

On 7 February 2019 the Government published its response to the consultation on the Regulation of Medical Associate Professions in the UK.

The response confirmed the decision announced on 12 October 2018 by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to introduce statutory regulation for physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs) (formerly known as physicians' assistants (anaesthesia)). However, we set out that further work was required to decide which regulator would take forward regulation of these roles.

Following the completion of this work, we believe that the GMC are best placed to regulate PAs and AAs. Regulation will enable these groups to work to their full potential and provide the very best care to patients as part of a multidisciplinary clinical team, contributing to the development of a safe and flexible workforce. This is an important step towards meeting workforce commitments in each of the four countries including the Interim NHS People Plan in England.

The UK and Devolved Governments will now work together alongside stakeholders to develop and then consult on draft legislation.

HOME OFFICE**■ Disclosure and Barring Service Annual Report and Accounts 2018 – 2019**

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability (Victoria Atkins): [\[HCWS1755\]](#)

I am today publishing the annual report of the Disclosure and Barring Service (HC 2539). Copies of the report have been laid before the House and will be available in the Vote Office.

■ Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority – Annual Reports and Accounts 2017-18

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability (Victoria Atkins): [\[HCWS1745\]](#)

The 2017-18 Annual Report and Accounts for the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (HC 2486) is being laid before the House today and published on www.gov.uk. Copies will be available in the Vote Office.

■ Security Industry Authority (SIA) Annual Report and Accounts 2018 – 2019

The Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Mr Nick Hurd): [\[HCWS1754\]](#)

The 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts for the Security Industry Authority (HC 2540) is being laid before the House today and published on www.gov.uk. Copies will be available in the Vote Office.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Building safety update**

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (James Brokenshire): [\[HCWS1757\]](#)

I wish to update the House before the Summer recess on building safety, including: my expectations of building owners on the removal of unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding; the steps this Government is taking on the remediation of existing buildings; wider updates on testing programmes; and early action on delivering the recommendations to reform the building safety regulatory system.

My priority is that residents should be safe – and feel safe – in their homes. All buildings with ACM cladding have had interim safety measures put in place as soon as they have been identified, and Fire and Rescue Services are conducting inspections to ensure those measures remain in place.

However, too many people have been living in fear for too long because of the slow progress being made by those responsible for making their buildings permanently safe. While many building owners have rightly taken action, there are still a number of

residential buildings across the public and private sectors with unsafe ACM cladding where remediation has not yet started.

I am clear that this situation is unacceptable. That is why I want to set out my expectations on the timing of remediation of buildings with unsafe ACM cladding. Given the £600 million of funding this Government has made available, there is no further excuse for delay.

In the social sector, other than a small handful of exceptional cases, remediation will be completed by the end of the year.

In the private sector, progress has been slower, which is why this Government took action by announcing a £200 million fund. By the end of December 2019, any building in the private sector which I have not been assured is permanently safe should have a clear commitment to remediation, with a start and finish date agreed. Where no such safety assurance or plan has been brought forward by the end of December, building owners can expect enforcement action to be taken. My expectation is that, other than in exceptional circumstances, building owners should complete remediation within six months of agreeing a plan – by June 2020.

I acknowledge that this Government also has a role to play in ensuring that remediation is undertaken. That is why, on 9 May I announced that this Government was introducing a new £200 million fund to unblock progress in remediating private sector high-rise residential buildings. My Department has been in contact with relevant building owners or managers to enable them to start preparatory work on an application to the fund. My Department will today publish a prospectus setting out the scope and eligibility criteria for the fund, how to apply and the timetable for submitting applications.

To help facilitate remediation, I would like to clarify the planning treatment of ACM cladding replacement works. Planning permission may not be required where the external appearance of a building is not materially altered by replacement cladding. Approval for recladding is only needed if the work amounts to “development” within the meaning of section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or is required within the terms of a previous planning permission.

Local planning authorities should take a proportionate approach and work proactively with building owners to identify whether planning approval is necessary. I strongly encourage developers to engage with the local planning authority at the earliest opportunity during development of their remediation plans.

Where a planning application is considered necessary, pre-application engagement can help to resolve any issues and assist local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions. Local planning authorities should also take a proportionate approach to the amount of information needed to support an application and consider carefully whether charging a fee for their early advice is appropriate in these cases. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible and can be made as soon as the time limit for consultation has expired. Building owners would also need to ensure that the work complies with Building Regulations and that they obtain the necessary approval.

My Department has also commenced a data collection exercise which will enable the Department to build a complete picture of external wall systems in use on high rise residential buildings. We have asked local authorities and housing associations to identify external wall materials and insulation on all high-rise residential buildings 18 metres and over.

On 11 July a fire test in accordance with British Standard 8414 was carried out at the laboratories of the Fire Protection Association. This test was commissioned by my Department on the advice of the Independent Expert Advisory Panel and involved a cladding system consisting of a Class B, fire retardant, high pressure laminate rainscreen with a non-combustible rock fibre insulation. This is part of an ongoing, systematic investigation into the fire risks from non-ACM cladding systems. I can confirm that this system met the relevant pass criteria and that the Expert Panel are satisfied that this specific system does not present a risk to public safety. Detailed advice from the Expert Panel on high pressure laminate cladding systems is also being published by my Department today.

My Department has also continued its investigations into fire doors. We have already made available the results of a sample of Glass-Reinforced Plastic composite fire doors tested by my Department. Following the advice of the Expert Panel, Government expanded the testing to include timber fire doors. Today I am making available the results from the testing of a sample of timber fire doors from 25 manufacturers. I am pleased to report that all have succeeded in meeting the required 30-minute fire performance standard. The sample included a range of glazed and un-glazed fire doors with a variety of hardware and were tested on both sides of the door. The summary results of the timber fire door tests to inform building risk assessments are now available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fire-door-investigation>

As a result of our tests, the Expert Panel have concluded that they do not believe there is a performance concern with timber fire doors across industry, where they are purchased directly from the manufacturer and produced to specification.

It is important to be clear that, although the results of our testing provide assurances for residents who have concerns about their fire doors, it is for building owners to assure themselves that the fire doors they install are fit for purpose and have the required documentation and certification. Guidance for building owners who are replacing flat front entrance doors can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-building-owners-on-assurance-and-replacing-of-flat-entrance-fire-doors>

Since 2007, building regulations guidance has stated that all new blocks of flats over 30 metres should have sprinklers. In 2013, the Department wrote to all local authorities and housing associations, asking them to consider a Coroner's Report recommendation that they should consider retro-fitting sprinklers in existing residential buildings over 30 metres.

The Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap was abolished on 29th October 2018, giving freedom to local authorities to help finance unforeseen capital repairs programmes, such as retro-fitting sprinklers, as well as build new homes. It is for building owners to

seek professional advice and decide whether to fit sprinklers, on the basis of their assessment of the particular risk faced in their buildings.

At the heart of the regulatory reform is our intention to establish a regulator to oversee the safety and performance of all buildings. We are working closely with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), who are sharing their considerable regulatory experience and expertise to help us shape the functions of the new regulator, alongside other members of our Joint Regulators Group. My Department is working with partners to develop proposals to allow the regulatory functions to exist prior to the new legislative regime being in place. We are similarly seeking the advice and input of the HSE on implementing the new regime following legislation.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak: Update on UK Response

Secretary of State for International Development (Rory Stewart): [\[HCWS1756\]](#)

It is nearly a year since the declaration of the tenth Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This is the second largest Ebola outbreak and the first in a conflict zone. The risks remain very high. And we need – as an international community – to keep a relentless focus on these issues: addressing failings in public health systems, controlling cross-border transmission, working with communities, and getting the basics right on surveillance, tracing, vaccination and treatment.

Since my oral statement to the House on 20 May, the number of cases has continued to grow and despite successes in some areas, new geographic areas have been affected – including Goma in the DRC and across the border in Uganda. Yesterday the World Health Organisation declared this outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. This declaration is highly significant and will bring more focus and instruments to bear on the crisis. The UK has been a major donor since the start. This week we have announced up to an additional £50 million of support to combat the outbreak in the DRC. We have also been pushing hard at meetings of the G7 development ministers, WHO and at the UN for more support from other countries.

The affected part of the DRC has suffered from decades of conflict and under-development, is an opposition stronghold, and there is a deep mistrust of national and international institutions. Despite the best efforts of front-line health workers, the response has struggled to gain trust, and responders have been the direct target of multiple attacks. The outbreak has spread to new health zones in the current two provinces, and several areas that were previously under control are now seeing new cases again. As of 14 July, there have been 2,501 cases, of which 2,407 are confirmed and 94 are probable. In total, there have been 1,668 deaths (1,574 confirmed and 94 probable) and 700 people have recovered. This is the most complex public health emergency in recent history.

For the first time in this outbreak, three cases were confirmed in Uganda in June. This represents the sixth outbreak Uganda has had since 2000. Uganda's Ministry of Health,

with good support from the DRC and significant assistance on preparedness from the UK, reacted swiftly to this long-anticipated outbreak. While Uganda deserves praise for containing these cases, there is no room for complacency, particularly in addressing resources for health facilities where public health systems are weak.

A record number of health zones have now been affected in the DRC. The city of Goma, on the border with Rwanda, has in the last week confirmed its first case. The confirmed case in Goma is a significant development and may increase the risk of further transmission to other areas of the DRC and neighbouring countries. Goma is a significant regional trading and transport hub and we are therefore closely monitoring the situation. We are also asking the WHO to increase its focus on preparedness in the region, particularly in South Sudan and Burundi.

I am thankful for the prompt response by staff at the Ebola Treatment Centre, in Goma, which I visited on my recent trip to the DRC. However, it was clear during my time there that some measures, such as temperature checks at the hospital entrance, are not consistently applied and could be improved. I also visited the Ebola Treatment Centre in Katwa that has been rebuilt after being burned down in February. This centre seemed to have a good focus on basic procedures and to be making good use of the latest technology, including transparent cubes which allow doctors and families to interact with patients without wearing full protective gear.

I want to once again commend the bravery of the Congolese and international frontline responders who are working incredibly hard to end this outbreak. But they must have adequate support. To ensure a successful response, the UK is committed to supporting the response financially, but also through sending UK-funded experts to the region, including data analysts, response coordinators and managers.

The WHO and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) convened a meeting in Geneva on the 15 July to focus attention and signal a reset of the response. I was privileged to be able to represent the UK at that meeting, which was timely, as a new Strategic Response Plan (SRP4) covering the next six months of the response will shortly be published.

In Geneva I made clear the UK's ongoing support to the Government of DRC and the region more broadly, with a new commitment of up to £50 million for the response in the DRC. So far, UK aid has provided technical experts to eastern DRC, including senior epidemiologists, data scientists and a clinical trials specialist, and previously funded the development of a vaccine, which has helped to contain the outbreak. More than 160,000 doses have been administered to at-risk people in the DRC and neighbouring countries. The vaccine has proved to be over 97% effective and is a vital part of the response in this fragile and complex environment. However, vaccination alone will not end this outbreak, and stronger community ownership is essential. We need to build trust in the response. To end this outbreak people with symptoms of Ebola need to come forward and seek treatment. Effective isolation and treatment will improve their chance of survival and allow the response to follow up quickly and vaccinate those who they have been in contact with.

I also made clear in Geneva that we expect other countries to play a bigger role in the response as a matter of urgency. They need to step up their efforts and funding. The US and UK are the two the biggest bilateral donors to the response and although other countries have given some financial support, more is needed. Other countries, particularly francophone countries, which have a presence and history in the region, must support the response with funding, technical expertise and political support.

The UK will also continue to play a leading role in regional preparedness – where we are the largest donor. Events in Uganda demonstrate the value of investing in preparedness activities and health systems strengthening; quick action saves both lives and costs in the long term. Again, other countries should step up their support to avoid a crisis that destabilises the wider region.

The risk of Ebola to the UK population remains very low. Public Health England continues to monitor the situation daily and review the risk assessment on a two-weekly basis. The UK Government continues to work across all departments to ensure all relevant expertise is brought to bare on tackling this important issue.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Prime Minister's Trade Envoys

Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Dr Liam Fox): [\[HCWS1760\]](#)

The Prime Minister has today approved two new appointments to the Trade Envoy programme. Ian Austin MP has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Israel, and Lord Risby as Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Lebanon (this is in addition to his current role as PM's Trade Envoy to Algeria) These new appointments take the total number of Trade Envoys to 27 parliamentarians covering 58 markets. The Prime Minister's Trade Envoy programme is an unpaid and voluntary cross-party network, who support the UK's ambitious trade and investment agenda in global markets."

■ Public Consultation on Future Trade Agreements - Summary of Responses

Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Dr Liam Fox): [\[HCWS1735\]](#)

Last summer, we launched four 14-week long public consultations providing citizens and businesses across the UK and overseas with the opportunity to give their views on potential future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and on the UK potentially seeking accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Today, I will place a summary of responses received for each consultation exercise in the Library of the House. I will also publish these online on GOV.UK.

The public consultations attracted significant interest with 601,121 responses received across all four consultations. In view of the need to ensure that due consideration is given

to each submission, we will publish the Government Response at a later date but before any formal trade negotiations begin, alongside an Outline Approach which sets out our high-level negotiation objectives and will explain how these have been informed by the consultation responses.

The Government is committed to ensuring a transparent and inclusive trade policy, which supports the interests of consumers and businesses across the whole of the UK. The Government will continue to engage with the public, businesses and other stakeholders in order to understand their views and to help develop UK trade policy.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Review of Consolidated Guidance

Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May):

[\[HCWS1738\]](#)

The Government is today publishing new guidance titled *The Principles Relating to the Detention and Interviewing of Detainees Overseas and the Passing and Receipt of Intelligence Relating to Detainees*. This will replace the existing “Consolidated Guidance” and follows a thorough review by Sir Adrian Fulford, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner.

Following my request last June for him to conduct a review, the Commissioner held a public consultation in the autumn and organised a Chatham House event in December 2018 for academics, practitioners and representatives from non-governmental organisations to discuss how the Consolidated Guidance could be improved. He has also taken into account the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament’s recommendations in their June 2018 detainee report and those of Sir Mark Waller, the then Intelligence Services Commissioner, in his 2016 report on UK relationships with partner counter-terrorism units overseas.

The Government has accepted the Commissioner’s proposed Principles in full. It is being published today on Gov.UK and copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House. The new guidance is being extended to include the National Crime Agency and SO15 Metropolitan Police Service and will provide clear direction for UK personnel on their interaction with detainees held by others overseas and the handling of intelligence derived from them. The Principles will come into effect from 1 January 2020 once the necessary underlying departmental training and guidance is in place. The Consolidated Guidance will remain in use until then. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will continue to oversee and report on its application.

The Government is grateful to the Commissioner for undertaking this review. The new Principles will ensure that the United Kingdom continues to lead the field internationally in terms of providing guidance to personnel on intelligence sharing in a manner that protects human rights.

Our policy remains clear: the Government does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment for any purpose.

TRANSPORT**■ Trailer Safety report****Minister of State for Transport (Michael Ellis):**[\[HCWS1744\]](#)

Colleagues across the House will be aware that towing safety is an issue of widespread interest and concern, particularly ahead of the key Summer caravanning season. In that context I am pleased to announce to the House the publication of a report into trailer safety. This sets out the Government's position as required by the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act 2018.

This country has one of the best road safety records in the world, but every death and injury is a tragedy for the families involved. Ministerial colleagues and Department officials have heard directly from families of those affected by fatal trailer incidents. I pay tribute to all those, including the parents of Freddie Hussey, and of Harry Christian-Allan, who have sought to improve trailer safety following such terrible bereavements. I also pay tribute to Members across the House, such as the Hon. Member for Bristol South, who have taken action in this area, such as the recently-convened All-Party Parliamentary Group on Trailer and Towing Safety.

This report has helped consolidate and develop the evidence base related to trailers. It is clear, including from roadside checks by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) undertaken for this report, that many light trailers are used on public roads in a defective state. A focus must be maintained on driving up the safety of these trailers. However, only in a relatively few cases do vehicle defects contribute to serious incidents. Trailer-related incidents share some characteristics with the wider light vehicle fleet, including that human error is a far more prevalent reason for incidents. On the basis of the information set out in this report, the Government is therefore not extending current vehicle testing or registration requirements in relation to trailers.

However, as the report highlights, there is further work in this area which the Government will take forward. There is more information to consider and this report proposes some future steps, including additional trailer checks to be carried out by DVSA. This will build the evidence base further. A number of non-regulatory and other regulatory levers, including previous changes in driving licence entitlements now spreading through the motoring public, will also have an effect.

This report is an important milestone and is not itself an endpoint. I look forward to working together with all parties to ensure that momentum is maintained in this area, and that trailer safety continues to improve.

Attachments:

1. Trailer Safety report [190718 - Trailer Safety report.pdf]

TREASURY**■ Extending the Senior Managers and Certification Regime to Financial Conduct Authority solo-regulated firms**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen): [\[HCWS1743\]](#)

Today the Bank of England and Financial Services Act 2016 (Commencement No. 6 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/1136 C. 35) are published.

In my Written Ministerial Statement of 3 July 2018 [HCWS823] I announced that the Senior Managers and Certification Regime would come into force for financial services firms regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority only (also known as solo-regulated firms) from 9 December 2019. I would like to update the House that, in these Regulations, there will be two exceptions to the commencement date, for newer categories of solo regulated firms.

The first are benchmark administrators. This is a new category of authorised firm introduced by the EU Benchmark Regulation, which came into force on January 1 2018. The Benchmark Regulations included a transitional period such that these firms have until the end of 2019 to become FCA Authorised. The SM&CR will commence for benchmark administrators on 7 December 2020 to allow the FCA to carry out a dedicated consultation for benchmark administrators before making final rules for the sector.

The second are Claims Management Companies (CMCs). The Government has already legislated to bring CMCs within the FCA's regulation, and applications for authorisation are currently being considered by the FCA. Firms awaiting full authorisation, but previously regulated by the Ministry of Justice will have temporary permission to operate. Not all CMCs will have gained full authorisation by December 9 this year, so the commencement regulations confirm that the SM&CR begins for these firms on December 9 this year, or at the date at which they receive full authorisation if this is later.

■ Fiscal Risks Report 2019

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Philip Hammond): [\[HCWS1749\]](#)

In accordance with the Charter for Budget Responsibility, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has today published its second Fiscal Risks Report (FRR). The OBR published its first FRR in 2017, which the government responded to in 2018 through the Managing Fiscal Risks report (MFR). FRR 2019 fulfils the OBR's legal obligation to publish a statement setting out the main risks to the public finances at least once every two years. The report features an updated risk assessment of the original issues the OBR raised in FRR 2017, in addition to highlighting new risks to the public finances. It was laid before Parliament earlier today and copies are available in the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office.

The UK is one of the few countries in the world to publish a standalone report on fiscal risks and the FRR is the only such report to be published by an independent agency rather than the government itself. The UK is a world leader in fiscal risk disclosure and management and is determined to set the global standard not only for the disclosure of

fiscal risks but also for the active management of those risks. The IMF's 2018 Article IV consultation noted that "The UK continues to set international standards with respect to fiscal transparency". This report keeps the UK at the frontier of fiscal management internationally and demonstrates the government's commitment to fiscal transparency and accountability. The publication of FRR 2019 further strengthens the cycle of accountability that the first report started. As required under the Charter for Budget Responsibility the government will respond formally to the FRR 2019 within the next year.

The government has helped to build a stronger, fairer economy – dealing with the deficit, helping people into work, and cutting taxes for people, families, and businesses. The economy has grown continuously for the past nine years, the employment level is currently at a record high, unemployment is currently at its lowest rate and level since 1975, inflation is at the Bank of England's target and real wages are rising. We are tackling the productivity challenge head on because it is the only way to sustainably improve living standards in the long term.

The government has also made substantial progress in improving the health of the public finances since 2010, which have now reached a turning point. The deficit has been reduced by more than four-fifths and debt has begun its first sustained fall in a generation. At Spring Statement 2019, the OBR confirmed that the government is forecast to meet both of the interim fiscal rules early, with the structural deficit now below 2% and debt falling in every year of the forecast. The government has achieved this through a balanced approach to fiscal policy; continuing to reduce debt, while also supporting vital public services, keeping taxes low and investing in Britain's future.

Within this balanced approach, the government took the decision to make the NHS the number one spending priority, committing to an historic settlement that provides a cash increase of £33.9bn a year by 2023-24. This record level of additional funding for our public services has been delivered within a responsible fiscal framework, and has been accompanied by a clear and credible NHS Long-Term Plan, which includes measures to put the NHS back onto a sustainable financial path.

Furthermore, the government has taken concrete action to reduce a number of risks, which the OBR has acknowledged in FRR 2019. This includes better management of new contingent liabilities, reducing the issuance of index linked gilts and improvements in the management and reporting of legal risks in the welfare system. The government has also made significant improvements in monitoring and transparency of its fiscal risks, including introducing stricter disclosure requirements for asset sales and revised budgetary treatment for financial transactions.

While the government has acted, many of the risks discussed by the OBR in their first report remain. In the medium term, the largest potential risks come from the macroeconomy and financial sector in the form of financial crises and major economic downturns. The OBR have also modelled the fiscal implications of the UK leaving the EU without a deal in their fiscal stress test. The stress test is based on the IMF's less disruptive no-deal scenario. The OBR note this scenario is not necessarily the most likely outcome and it is relatively benign compared to other possible scenarios (for example, assuming limited short-term border disruptions). The OBR report that this scenario would

add around £30 billion a year to borrowing from 2020-21 onwards and around 12 per cent of GDP to net debt by 2023-24, compared with the OBR's March forecast baseline.

In the long term, the most significant fiscal risks come from structural economic and societal trends such as lower productivity growth, higher interest rates, changes in consumption and working practice, demographic pressures and technological change. Additionally, the report highlights new risks – such as climate change and the costs associated with measures designed to adapt and mitigate the effects. The risks the OBR has highlighted further reinforce the need for prudent management of the public finances and the reduction of debt to more sustainable levels.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Government Response to Opposition Day Debate: Inequality and Social Mobility**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Family Support, Housing & Child

Maintenance (Will Quince):

[\[HCWS1734\]](#)

Following the recent Opposition Day Debate on 12 June, I am setting out the approach this Government is taking to tackling inequality and improving social mobility.

This Government is leading the way in creating opportunity so every person growing up in Britain has the chance to build a bright future for themselves and their families – no matter what their background. Employment has risen in every UK region under this Government, as wages outstrip inflation, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed since 2011 and the proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds in education or apprenticeships is at its highest ever – that is social mobility in action.

Our record on employment is vital to our approach, and one of which we are rightly proud. There are now over 3.6 million more people in work compared with 2010. Unemployment is at its lowest rate since the 1970s having fallen by more than half since 2010. This isn't just a London or a South East success story – over 60% of the employment growth since 2010 has occurred in other parts of the UK. We are working across Government and with businesses to ensure everyone has the chance to gain the skills and high quality jobs they need to compete in a dynamic, global market place.

Around three-quarters of the growth in employment since 2010 has been in full-time work, which we know substantially reduces the risk of poverty. Wages have consistently outpaced inflation for 15 months - in fact they are growing at their fastest rate for a decade. The growth in employment rates has overwhelmingly benefited the poorest 20% of households, and household income inequality is also lower than it was in 2010.

Behind these statistics are people whose mental health and wellbeing are improved by moving into work and having the dignity and security that it brings. There are 930,000 more disabled people in work today compared with five years ago, and 667,000 more children in working households compared with 2010. We know that children in households where all adults work are about 5 times less likely to be in relative poverty than a child in a household where nobody works.

We also know that children growing up in workless families are almost twice as likely as children in working families to fail at all stages of their education. Since 2011 we have narrowed the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers by around 13% at Key Stage 2, and 9.5% at Key Stage 4. We are supporting pupils to thrive at every stage, that's why we introduced 15 hours of free childcare for disadvantaged 2 year-olds on top of the 15 hours' free childcare offer for all three and four-year olds.

We are investing in our world-class education system; core funding for schools and high needs has risen from almost £41 billion in 2017-18 to £43.5 billion this year. We are investing £72m through our Opportunity Areas programme in 12 places in the country with weak social mobility and up to £24m through our Opportunity North East Programme, tackling the specific issues that are holding back young people in the North East. Through both these programmes we will improve educational outcomes for children and young people working in partnership with local partners. We have set a 10-year ambition to boost children's early reading and communication skills. We are transforming technical education with investment of an extra half a billion pounds per year once T-Levels are fully rolled-out. Disadvantaged 18-year-olds are now entering full-time higher education at record rates, and we are providing coaching for young jobseekers to put them on track to succeed.

Supporting people on low income to progress in work is also key to our success in tackling inequality. Universal Credit removes the structural disincentives to move into work and to work more hours that were a part of the legacy benefits it replaces. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has reported that Universal Credit is likely to help an extra 300,000 members of working families out of poverty, the majority of which include someone who works part-time. We want to build a clearer picture of how and why people progress in work, and what we can do to support them as they do that. We have started discussions with the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry on how we can do this. We are going further with two national pilots on in-work progression; one will train work coaches to help those in work to decide when and how to switch jobs, to achieve that ambitious step up. The other will boost our capability for working with local businesses, by creating jobcentre specialists who encourage local employers to support progression and good-quality flexible working.

Childcare costs can affect parents' decisions to take up paid work, increase their working hours, or remain in paid work. To overcome this barrier to employment we increased the level of support for childcare costs from 70 per cent in legacy benefits, to 85 per cent within Universal Credit. This is in addition to providing a significant package of childcare support to parents and carers, including our 30 hours offer for working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds which has rolled out successfully, benefitting around 600,000 children in the first two years of delivery and introducing tax-free childcare worth up to £2,000 a year per child.

Our National Living Wage which is among the highest in the world, is expected to benefit over 1.7m people; and, with the increase to £8.21 from April this year, has increased a full-time worker's annual pay by over £2,750 since 2016. We have taken action to reduce income inequality through the tax system too. Our tax changes will make basic rate tax

payers over £1,200 better off from April, compared with 2010. Taken together, the most recent changes mean that a single person on the National Living Wage has, from April, taken home over £13,700 a year - £4,500 more than in 2009/10.

It is absolutely right that we continue to support those who need it and our welfare safety net remains one of the strongest in the world. This year we will spend over £95 billion on benefits for people of working age; and £52.7 to support disabled people and those with health conditions. In total, welfare spending in this financial year will be over £220 billion.

We recognise that there is more to do to tackle poverty; and we have taken action to increase the incomes of the poorest in society. In the last Budget we announced a £4.5bn cash boost that will make a huge difference to the lives of working families and provide extra support for people moving onto UC. In particular, we have put an extra £1.7 billion a year into work allowances, increasing the amount that hard-working families can earn before the taper is applied. That is an extra £630 a year for 2.4 million families.

It is vital that we have evidence on the effects of poverty in order to tackle it, and in the run-up to the spending review we will examine what more can be done to address poverty, particularly child poverty, and to support social mobility. We are working with the Social Metrics Commission and other experts in the field to develop new experimental statistics to measure poverty, which will be published in 2020 and, in the long run, could help us to target support more effectively

The welfare system is not just about providing financial support. The most vulnerable in our society often face complex barriers to employment which can prevent them from moving on with their lives. So we are taking wider action to address barriers specific to different groups and ensure that Universal Credit works for all those with complex needs.

By supporting care leavers through their difficult transition into adulthood with a series of safeguards and easements, work coaches can have a real impact on a young person's life chances. And around 135 prison work coaches based in resettlement prisons across Great Britain help prisoners gain employment on release, supporting with benefit claims pre-release.

We have a proud record when it comes to supporting victims of domestic abuse. Work search requirements can be suspended for up to 6 months under Universal Credit to enable them to stabilise their lives. By the end of the summer, we will have a domestic abuse and homelessness advocate in every jobcentre in England, who can build work coach capability in these areas, and make important links with organisations in the community.

In conclusion, work provides economic independence, pride in having a job; and improved wellbeing. Through record employment, investment in early years, education, and other public services, this Government is taking long-term steps to tackle poverty. It is the right approach and the only sustainable one.