



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 July 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:45 P.M., 24 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

CABINET OFFICE

■ Festivals and Special Occasions

John Redwood:

[\[278882\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to celebrate UK independence day on 31 October 2019.

Mr David Lidington:

Plans for any ceremonial or official events to mark the formal exit of the UK from the EU will be kept under review by the Cabinet Office and Department for Exiting the European Union.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[279433\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to simplify Government procurement processes to increase access to contracts by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Oliver Dowden:

We have already made a number of changes to procurement processes to assist small businesses and we continue to focus on breaking down the barriers to entry for SMEs. These include:

- Increasing the transparency of opportunities via Contracts Finder, a free-to-use digital platform which covers current and future public sector contracts and award notices above £10,000 in central government and £25,000 in the wider public sector.
- Requiring public buyers to divide contracts into more accessible lots (or explain why not);
- Our Public Procurement Review Service, allows suppliers to report poor procurement practice including payment issues in public sector contracts and through supply chains to the Cabinet Office.

In September 2019, tough new prompt payment measures come into force which may lead to suppliers being excluded from Government procurements if they cannot demonstrate prompt payment.

■ National Underground Asset Register

Chi Onwurah:

[\[279413\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the status is of the national underground asset register trial; whether the information on that trial has been shared with stakeholders; and what opendata access is available from that trial.

Oliver Dowden:

The Geospatial Commission launched two pilots in April 2019 (one led by Ordnance Survey in the North East of England; the other by the Greater London Authority in six local authorities in London) to test the feasibility of creating a national underground asset register showing the location of underground pipes, cables and ducts to help reduce costly utility strikes and improve worker safety. Both pilots are making good progress and are scheduled to complete on time in March 2020.

Regular programme updates are provided to relevant stakeholders. The outputs of the pilots will include a data sharing agreement framework, inventory reports of existing data, a common data model, recommended requirements for a national build and findings from use case testing. These outputs will be shared as appropriate in any related tender packs after the pilots have completed.

DEFENCE**■ Ascension Island: Airports****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[278427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made in the resurfacing of the runway on Ascension Island.

Mark Lancaster:

The US Air Force Civil Engineering Centre are expecting tender returns in August 2019 from which the contract will be awarded in the final quarter of 2019.

■ Autonomous Weapons**Paul Farrelly:**[\[279386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of supporting a ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Mark Lancaster:

The United Kingdom does not support a ban on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. The UK considers its extant legal and regulatory framework for the development, assurance and deployment of military systems to be sufficient to ensure that the capabilities we field will always meet our obligations under international law.

■ Defence Business Services: Staff**Gerald Jones:**[\[279109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of staff at the Defence Business Services office at Tomlinson House, Norcross are (a) part-time, (b) female, (c) over 50 years old and (d) disabled.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

The proportion of staff at Tomlinson House, Norcross who are part-time, female, over 50 years old and disabled as of 30 June 2019 is as follows:

PART-TIME	34.6%
Female	70.3%
50 or Over	48.5%
Disabled *	11.0%*

*These figures are a minimum as the declaration of a disability is not mandatory.

■ Falkland Islands: Armed Forces

Andrew Rosindell: [\[278428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to increase the armed forces presence in the Falkland Islands.

Mark Lancaster:

There is currently no plan to increase the Armed Forces presence in the Falkland Islands.

■ Gibraltar: Armed Forces

Andrew Rosindell: [\[278425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to increase the armed forces presence in Gibraltar.

Mark Lancaster:

There is currently no plan to increase the Armed Forces presence in Gibraltar.

■ Ministry of Defence: Working Hours

Jon Trickett: [\[278379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much time off in lieu has been taken by staff in her Department in each of the last five years.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Time Off in Lieu is offered as an alternative to paid overtime where an individual works beyond conditioned hours or on days they would not normally be required to work.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) ensures compliance with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations 1998 in respect of civil servants' working hours and it is

the responsibility of all line managers to ensure employees are not working excessive hours in line with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations 1998.

The MOD is also committed to ensuring the wellbeing of staff and take action to ensure staff are able to maintain a satisfactory work/life balance

■ Royal Fleet Auxiliary: Finance

Luke Pollard: [\[278613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual budget was for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary in each financial year since 2008-09.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

From the information available for scrutiny, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) annual budgets from financial year 2015-16 to date, rounded to the nearest million, are provided below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	BUDGET (£MILLION)
2015-16	£175
2016-17	£149
2017-18	£191
2018-19	£174

These figures include RFA deployed costs; shoreside costs; wages, and through life and flotilla support.

Due to a change in finance systems, costs prior to financial year 2015-16 have been archived and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

■ War Pensions: Appeals

Ruth Smeeth: [\[280407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many letters of delay the Veterans Agency is issuing to veterans awaiting an assessment appeal for their war pension on average.

Mr Tobias Ellwood:

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

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Government Departments: Digital Technology****Jo Platt:**[\[279145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 17 July 2019 to Question 276284 on Government Departments: Digital Technology, if he will publish that information before the summer recess.

Jeremy Wright:

I refer the Hon Member to the response to PQ 276284.

■ Tourism: Beer**Ben Lake:**[\[279135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the sale of beer brewed by small independent breweries in pubs on tourism in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

While we have made no assessment into the effect of the sale of beer brewed by independent breweries on tourism in the UK, VisitBritain research shows that 42% of international visits include at least one visit to a pub, and pubs are key to our international offer. The recently published Tourism Sector Deal aims to support the tourism and hospitality sector, from pubs to hotels to accommodation providers.

EDUCATION**■ Adult Education****Ian Mearns:**[\[278476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the adult education budget is for (a) financial year 2019-20 and (b) academic year 2019-20; and what proportion of that budget is devolved to the seven combined authorities in England.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Adult Education Budget for the financial year 2019-20 is £1.34 billion, of which £52 million is held nationally for traineeships and continuing learners. The 6 Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority have been allocated 49% of the remaining budget.

■ Children in Care**Mohammad Yasin:**[\[279124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of looked-after children that have (a) run away and (b) gone missing from homes and hostels not subject to the children's homes regulations since 2014.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Information on the proportion of looked after children who 'run away' from homes and hostels, not subject to children's home regulations, is not collected and categorised under this definition. The information that is collected is the number of looked after children who go missing from residential homes or hostels not bound by children homes regulations. The definition of 'missing' is defined as a looked after child who is not at their placement or a place they are expected to be, such as a school, and their whereabouts is not known.

The table presents the proportion of the number of children who had been looked after at some point during this year in this same type of placement. As these statistics are experimental statistics and based on data collected for the first time in 2015, the figures are not comparable between years. Some authorities have informed the department that they do not record any incidents as 'away without authorisation' but instead report all incidents as 'missing' information. We estimate that around 1 in 3 local authorities record this data this way. We will continue to assess whether the figures are considered robust enough to be classed as national statistics, rather than experimental.

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO WENT MISSING FROM RESIDENTIAL HOMES [1] NOT SUBJECT TO CHILDREN'S HOMES REGULATIONS [2] [3] [4](YEARS ENDING 31 MARCH 2015 TO 2018)

	All children looked after during the year	Children who had a missing incident during the year [5]	Percentage
2018	4,690	1,460	31
2017	4,310	1,170	27
2016	3,970	840	21
2015	3,000	440	15

The information provided does not mean that the number of children going missing is increasing in the volumes indicated in the table. All figures on the overall number of children who were looked after during the year - who were missing are still classified as experimental statistics. This is the fourth year these statistics have been collected in this way, and local authorities have reported some variation over recent years in how these incidents are recorded.

For more information, the latest national figures on looked after children who go missing and the number of incidents are published in Table G1 of the statistical release, Children looked after in England including adoption: 2017 to 2018, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018>.

1. Residential accommodation not subject to the Children's Homes Regulations, but where some supervisory or advice staff are employed (although they do not have to live on the premises). This placement code includes hostels, foyers, YMCAs. Also includes lodgings, flats and bedsits where supervisory staff or advice workers are specifically employed and available to provide advice and support to the residents.
2. Missing is defined as a looked after child who is not at their placement or a place they are expected to be (e.g. school) and their whereabouts is not known.
3. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. See the looked after children statistics guide for more information on rounding.
4. Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements.
5. Includes children who were missing on 1 April, therefore carried over from previous years. Some very young looked after children may go missing with their mothers who may well be looked after themselves.

■ Children: Day Care

Steve McCabe:

[\[278350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assistance is available to parents of disabled children who need additional childcare during the school summer holidays.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Local authorities are required to secure sufficient childcare in their area, so far as is practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

Since 2011, every local authority has also been under a duty to provide a range of short breaks for disabled children and their families. Responsibility for funding short breaks rests with local authorities. They are best placed and have the freedom to decide how to deliver services, target their resources and priorities and be flexible to meet the local needs of disabled children and young people.

Tax-free childcare was introduced in 2017 to support families with the costs of childcare, for which 1.6 million families are eligible. For every £8 that parents pay into an online account, the government pays £2 – up to a maximum contribution of £2,000 per child each year, for children aged up to 12. Parents of disabled children receive extra support (worth up to £4,000 per child, for each year and until their child is 17) which can be used to pay for childcare provision both during term time and in school holidays.

■ Computers: North Cornwall**Scott Mann:** [\[279106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how North Cornwall can bid for the National Centre for Computing funding of £84 million.

Nick Gibb:

Launched in November 2018, the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) is a comprehensive programme aimed at improving the teaching of computing and participation in computer science. Funding and delivery of this programme is through a network of computing hubs, and in July 2019, NCCE announced the first tranche of 23 hubs.

Truro and Penwith College is the first hub appointed in Cornwall. The Department will have a network of computing hubs offering full geographical coverage across England, by the end of the year. Schools and colleges can access support for teaching through the NCCE website or through their local computing hub.

■ Department for Education: Credit Unions**Gareth Thomas:** [\[279363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July 2019 to Question 271327, for what reasons his Department does not offer a payroll deduction service to enable employees to join a credit union; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department does not have the facility to allow staff to join a credit union through payroll deductions. This is because our employees have access to many other means of support including: arrangements to contribute to a credit union via direct debit; the opportunity to request salary advances; season ticket loans; and a tenancy rental deposit scheme. The department also encourages staff to make use of the Employee Assistance Programme to access support and advice on financial management where required.

■ Free School Meals: Coventry**Mr Jim Cunningham:** [\[279379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children in Coventry (a) eligible and (b) not eligible for free school meals who achieved five or more GCSEs at grades 4 to 9 in (i) 2017 and (ii) 2018.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The number and proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 4[1] in Coventry who achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalent) at grades 9 to 4 or A* to C, by free school meal (FSM) eligibility, are displayed in the attached tables for 2017 and 2018[2].

[1] Includes pupils at state-funded schools. Pupils are identified as being at the end of key stage 4 if they were on roll at the school and in year 11 at the time of the January school census for that year. Age is calculated as at 31 August for that year, and the

majority of pupils at the end of key stage 4 were aged 15 at the start of the academic year. Some pupils may complete this key stage in an earlier or later year group.

[2] Based on 2017 and 2018 final data and includes entries and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

Attachments:

1. 279379_table
[278562_table_percentage_of_children_achieving_a_good_level_of_development_in_early_years_foundation_stage_profile_teacher_assessments.doc]

■ **Higher Education: Care Leavers**

Steve McCabe:

[278347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the number of care leavers (a) accessing and (b) completing a higher education award.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The government is committed to improving the outcomes of care leavers. To support this, in March 2019, the department published a set of principles to guide the higher education sector on improving care leavers' access and participation. A copy of the principles is available at the following link: <https://mycovenant.org.uk/featured-signatories/educational/>.

As part of its drive to galvanise the support that wider civil society can provide to support care leavers, the government has launched the Care Leaver Covenant. This asks organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, including higher education providers, to commit to help care leavers to successfully transition from care to independence, by setting out clearly what support they can offer.

17 higher education providers have already signed the covenant and published their offers on the covenant website: <https://mycovenant.org.uk/offers/educational/>.

We want all higher education providers to work with Spectra First (the delivery partner appointed by the department to promote the covenant), which provides support in developing offers, with a view to them signing the covenant. To support this, we are organising a workshop with Universities UK and Spectra First in September, for higher education providers who are yet to sign. The event will make clear why they should support care leavers and provide examples of best practice on how they can do this.

■ Pre-school Education: Rural Areas**Andrea Leadsom:** **[280303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy of funding available for rural pre-schools and (b) quality of the learning environment for children attending a rural pre-school.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We plan to spend around £3.5 billion on our early education entitlements this year alone, more than any previous government. The government recognises the need to keep the evidence base on costs up to date.

We continue to monitor the provider market closely through a range of regular and one-off research projects which provide insight into various aspects of the provider market. That includes the 2018 Early Years Provider Costs report, which looked at a representative sample of providers, both in terms of provider type and geography, and which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics>.

As at 31 March 2019, 95% of early years providers were rated “Good” or “Outstanding” by Ofsted, compared with 68% in 2010. This information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics>.

Andrea Leadsom: **[280306]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the staff to children ratio at pre-schools in rural areas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years of age. This includes the minimum staff to child ratios that all early years providers must comply with, which is referenced in section 3 of the framework here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf.

Ofsted inspects early years settings against the EYFS statutory framework, which includes ensuring that safeguarding and welfare requirements are being met. As at 31 March 2019, 95% of early years providers were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, up from 68% in 2010.

■ Pre-school Education: Training**Andrea Leadsom:** **[280305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on pre-schools of the removal of funding for training of pre-school staff to level 3 standard.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Funding for training of pre-school staff to level 3 has not been removed.

Employers can access up to £6,000 for level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship training and employers are only required to pay 5% of the costs of training and assessing an apprentice. A link to the apprenticeship standards for Early Years Educator apprenticeship training can be found here:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/early-years-educator/>.

■ Pupil Exclusions: Secondary Education

Catherine West: [\[279122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in year (a) nine (b) 10 and (c) 11 were permanently excluded from a school in each of the last five years.

Catherine West: [\[279123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in year (a) nine, (b) 10 and (c) 11 left full-time education after permanent exclusion from a school in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Information on the number and rate of permanent exclusions is published in the annual permanent and fixed period exclusions statistical release which can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions>.

Data broken down by National Curriculum year group is published in table 3 and a time series is provided in the underlying data.

Information is not held centrally on the number of children who left full time education after a permanent exclusion in National Curriculum Years 9-11. Local authorities have a statutory duty to arrange suitable full time education for permanently excluded children of compulsory school age, which must begin no later than six days after the exclusion.

Following the Timpson review, the Department has committed to make schools accountable for the outcomes of permanently excluded pupils. Over the summer, the Department will work with education leaders to design a consultation, to be launched in the autumn, on how to deliver these reforms in practice.

■ Pupils: Absenteeism

Seema Malhotra: [\[279037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to reduce rates of absence among pupils that are (a) eligible free school meals, (b) have special educational needs and (c) are of the Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma ethnic groups in each London Borough.

Nick Gibb:

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. All parents have a legal duty to ensure that if their child is of compulsory school age that they receive a full time education, either by attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools should continually monitor pupils' absence. If a child's absence reaches a level of concern, the school should raise this with the parents and the local authority in the best interest of the child's education. School and local authorities should consider the individual circumstances of each case and take the appropriate course of action to ensure the child receives consistent education. This can include the use a range of parental responsibility measures to provide support or sanctions to parents when their child's attendance at school becomes a problem.

Schools also receive pupil premium funding to support pupils who have been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years, and have the flexibility to use it to improve attendance if this is deemed a priority.

The Department wants all children and young people, regardless of special educational need or disability, to receive the right support to succeed in their education. and as they move into adult life. In 2014, the Department introduced significant reforms to enable schools to put the right support in place for those pupils so that they can attend school.

The Department has established a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) stakeholder group, chaired by the noble Baroness Whitaker. This group aims to ensure that any efforts to improve the school system take into account GRT pupils' needs.

■ Pupils: Counselling**Catherine West:**[\[279120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) sixth-form, (b) secondary, and (c) primary schools offer (i) counselling services and (ii) access to counselling support.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises that school-based counselling by qualified practitioners can play an effective role in supporting mental health and wellbeing. It is up to schools to decide what support to provide for pupils based on their individual circumstances and this information is not collected by the Department.

The Department carried out a nationally representative survey of school provision for mental health published in 2017. This indicated that 61% of schools offer counselling services, with 84% of secondary schools providing their pupils with access to counselling support.[1] The Government has published guidance on how to deliver high quality school-based counselling and this can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

[1]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634726/Supporting_Mental-Health_survey_report.pdf.

■ Pupils: Disadvantaged

Steve McCabe:

[278348]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the attainment of children whose family receive universal credit with all school-aged children.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has not made a comparative assessment of the attainment of children whose families receive universal credit with all school-aged children. The relevant data to make an accurate assessment at this point in time is not available, but, data matching between the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions for research and statistics purposes is ongoing and as developments complete, work of this kind will become possible in future.

■ Pupils: Mental Health

Catherine West:

[279114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of exams on the mental health of (a) sixth-form, (b) secondary, and (c) primary school students.

Nick Gibb:

Assessments are an essential part of ensuring that children and young people are taught the knowledge and skills they need. Statutory assessments at Key Stages 1 and 2 help teachers to understand how their pupils are performing against national expectations and enable them to identify where extra support may be needed. Both statutory assessments and qualifications enable the Department to hold schools and colleges to account and in doing so help to ensure that they offer a high-quality education to all their pupils.

The Department is aware that tests and exams can be a time of heightened emotions for pupils and teachers, but they are not meant to cause stress and anxiety. Schools should encourage all pupils to work hard and achieve well, but this should not be at the expense of their wellbeing. They should also provide appropriate support for the betterment of pupils' wellbeing and resilience.

Catherine West:

[279121]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) community, (b) academy, (c) grammar and (d) independent school students were given special consideration in exams due to mental health problems in each of the last three years.

Nick Gibb:

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

Schools: Cricket**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[280224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase participation in cricket in state schools.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The physical education (PE) national curriculum is designed to ensure that all pupils develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities, are physically active for sustained periods of time and lead healthy and active lives.

State schools are free to organise and deliver a diverse and challenging PE curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils. Cricket is specifically listed as an example of a sport that can provide important elements of the PE national curriculum programme of study in key stages 2 to 4.

The recently announced School Sport and Activity Action Plan includes additional support for schools to open their facilities over the holidays and after hours to encourage every child to find a sport they love. The government will update the action plan in the light of the outcome of the forthcoming Spending Review and will work with sports governing bodies, including the England and Wales Cricket Board, in developing the proposals.

Through the Essential Life Skills fund, the department has recently provided £75,000 to the national cricket charity, Chance to Shine, to deliver extra-curricular sport to young people in Stoke-on-Trent, one of the department's 12 Opportunity Areas. In addition, Sport England supports children and young people in England by ensuring that there is a good sports and activity offer before and after the school day. This includes investing £28 million into Satellite Clubs between 2017 and 2021, some of which are cricket clubs.

Schools: Mental Health Services**Ruth George:**[\[279406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for resources to engage parents and carers of children in receipt of therapeutic services within school; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The department places a high priority on supporting parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Engaging parents fully in determining support for children with SEND is a critical part of the SEND reforms. Section 19 of the Children and Families Act places a duty on local authorities and others to listen to and take account of the views of parents in SEND matters.

The department continues to support families by funding parent carer forums (PCF) in each local authority area, providing £15,000 per year per PCF. The department also funds plus £1.9 million per year until March 2020 to support strategic participation and co-production with local authorities and other partners, by parents and young people through the charity Contact.

The department is also providing £20 million until March 2020 to improve the quality of local authority SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS), and to provide a national helpline and online support.

The IASS support builds on the £60m per year Independent Supporters programme (between 2014-18), which provided support to families going through the Education, Health and Care needs assessment and plan process.

■ **Schools: Uniforms**

Ms Lisa Forbes:

[\[279414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2019 to Question 273502 on Schools: Uniforms, what the timeframe is to bring forward legislative proposals on guidance for school uniform policies.

Nick Gibb:

The Department intends to put the school uniform guidance on a statutory footing when a suitable legislative opportunity arises.

■ **Secondary Education: Per Capita Costs**

John Redwood:

[\[278328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the (a) maximum and (b) average reduction in per pupil funding for a state secondary school was in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

Between 2015-16 and 2019-20 the government has made a significant investment in schools, with core schools funding growing by nearly £4 billion.

The table below shows the average funding per secondary pupil we have allocated to local authorities in England through the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE SCHOOLS BLOCK SECONDARY UNIT OF FUNDING (SUF)
2018-19	£5,228.74
2019-20	£5,294.78

Before 2018-19, the Department did not distinguish between phases when allocating funding to local authorities through the DSG. Each local authority will have set their own funding rates for secondary pupils for each year in this period. The average funding per pupil (schools block unit of funding) for the period between 2014-15 and 2017-18 is available in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE SCHOOLS BLOCK UNIT OF FUNDING (SBUF)
2014-15	£4,555.02
2015-16	£4,612.11
2016-17	£4,636.43
2017-18	£4,618.63

The drop in schools block per pupil funding between 2016-17 and 2017-18 is due to local authorities re-baselining funding between the DSG blocks, resulting in funding moving from the schools block into the high needs block.

In addition to schools block funding, schools also receive funding from separate funding streams and additional grants, such as the central schools services, and the high needs blocks of the DSG, as well as the Pupil Premium.

Local authorities continue to be responsible for distributing funding to schools in their local area, which they will have determined through their own local formulae. As a result, the Department does not hold any analysis of this data in order to provide the maximum and average change per secondary pupil at school level as requested. The Department publishes schools block allocations for individual maintained schools and academies online, which can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-block-funding-allocations>.

John Redwood:

[278329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what minimum per pupil sum is for a state secondary school to provide each pupil with a good quality education.

Nick Gibb:

There is no consensus about the minimum operating cost of a school at present. Each school is unique and the Department believes it should be for head teachers to decide their operating model.

The Department does have minimum per pupil funding levels in the national funding formula (NFF). In 2019-20 the minimum per pupil funding level for secondary schools is £4,800. Local authorities remain responsible for decisions about the distribution of funding at the local level, and Wokingham Borough Council has chosen to implement the NFF minimum per pupil funding levels.

■ Students: Counselling

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[279377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the counsellor to student ratio in (a) secondary schools and (b) primary schools in each local authority area in England and Wales.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises that school-based counselling by qualified practitioners can play an effective role in supporting mental health and wellbeing. It is up to schools to decide what support to provide for pupils based on their individual circumstances.

The information requested is not held centrally as the Department does not collect information on the ratio of counsellor to pupil numbers in primary or secondary schools in England. Education is a devolved matter and it is for the National Assembly to decide on policy for schools in Wales.

The Department carried out a nationally representative survey of school provision published in 2017. This indicated that 61% of schools offer counselling services, with 84% of secondary schools providing their pupils with access to counselling support.[1] The Government has provided advice on how to deliver high quality school-based counselling and this can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

[1]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634726/Supporting_Mental-Health_survey_report.pdf.

■ Students: Housing

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[279376]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help improve the standard of student housing.

Chris Skidmore:

Higher education providers are autonomous bodies that are independent from the government and so the government plays no direct role in the provision of student residential accommodation.

We have seen evidence that the standard of student accommodation is improving. For example, in 2018/19, the level of self-catered ensuite provision at institutions stood at approximately 222,000 rooms compared to approximately 203,000 in

2012/13, a 9% increase. Meanwhile, the number of self-catered standard rooms with shared facilities at institutions has declined from around 87,000 to approximately 64,000, a 26% decrease.

The independent panel supporting the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding published their report on 30 May where they recommended the Office for Students examines the costs of student accommodation and works with students and providers to improve the quality and consistency of data about costs, rents, profits and quality. The government will consider the panel's proposals and conclude the review at the Spending Review.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Dr David Drew:

[\[277626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of delinking basic payments from the land as outlined in paragraphs 91 to 99 of the explanatory notes to the Environment Bill on patterns of land ownership in rural areas.

Mr Robert Goodwill:

Alongside the introduction of the Agriculture Bill last September we published an analysis of the impacts of phasing out and delinking Direct Payments. Delinking may encourage a faster transition of farming businesses and may help those who choose to leave farming. This could increase the ease with which new entrants can acquire land for farming.

■ Solid Fuels: Heating

Alan Brown:

[\[277779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's consultation on cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels and wood in England, what different types of PM2.5s released when burning (a) smokeless briquettes, (b) wet wood, (c) dried wood and (d) house coal on open domestic fires in England his Department is assessing; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Thérèse Coffey:

Our assessments of emissions of pollutants from domestic combustion sources use a range of data which are based on established international reporting. These use different conversion factors for different fuels but do not distinguish between different types of PM2.5.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Department for Exiting the European Union: Ethnic Groups

Seema Malhotra:

[\[279049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many BAME staff are employed at (a) grade 7, (b) grade 5 and (c) grade 3 in his Department.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department for Exiting the European Union is committed to the creation of a diverse and inclusive working environment. Based on the self-declaration rates held on our system, the number of BAME staff employed in each grade group, and as a proportion of the staff in that grade who have made a declaration, is as follows:

GRADE	NUMBER (PROPORTION)
Band A (Grade 7 equivalent)	20 (13.6%)
Band A+ (Grade 6 equivalent)	12 (19.6%)
SCS1 (Grade 5 equivalent)	fewer than 5
SCS2 (Grade 3 equivalent)	fewer than 5

The Department has had success in attracting a diverse workforce at delegated grades (AO-G6 equivalent), and in particular our representation of BAME staff is one of the highest in government. Our priority is now to ensure we are representative at the most senior levels of the department focusing on processes such as talent, development, attraction and recruitment, as well as continuing to build an inclusive culture that celebrates uniqueness. These figures are based entirely on people identifying themselves as BAME on the Department's HR system.

■ EU Grants and Loans

Chuka Umunna:

[\[278501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, which parts of the Government's plan for the guarantee of EU-Funded programmes in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal (a) have and (b) have not been implemented.

James Cleverly:

In the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal, the Government has guaranteed EU Programme funding due to UK organisations.

Departments have well-developed contingency plans to implement this guarantee, if required. I refer the Hon. Member to the technical notices published by the Government on the guarantee. Departments have drafted the individual notices setting out how this guarantee will operate for specific programmes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-guarantee-for-eu-funded-programmes-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/the-governments-guarantee-for-eu-funded-programmes-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>

■ Travel

Ian Lavery: [\[278503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effects of the UK leaving the EU (a) with and (b) without a deal on inter-continental travel.

Mr Robin Walker:

As set out in the Political Declaration, the UK and the EU have agreed their intention to put in place a comprehensive air transport agreement (CATA). This will provide market access for UK and EU airlines, and close cooperation on aviation safety, security and air traffic management. Where market access beyond Europe is currently determined by EU-negotiated arrangements, the Withdrawal Agreement sets out that the EU will notify treaty partners and third countries that the UK is to be treated as an EU Member State for the purposes of its international agreements during the implementation period, including air service agreements.

In the event of a no deal both the UK and the EU have plans in place to ensure that travel will continue in the short term. For travel with non-EU third countries, as set out on gov.uk, the UK has already secured a number of arrangements, including with the US and Canada, to ensure continuity of travel to third countries where air services agreements are currently provided for by virtue of the UK's membership of the EU.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Preventive Medicine

Nic Dakin: [\[279415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the prevention Green Paper before the summer recess.

Seema Kennedy:

The Green Paper 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s' was published on 22 July 2019.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum

Peter Heaton-Jones: [\[280440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum-seekers crossed the Channel between November 2018 and January 2019 inclusive; and of those how many (a) were returned to France for processing of their asylum applications, (b)

have been granted asylum in the UK and (c) have applications being processed in the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office has published data on the number of migrants who crossed the Channel between November 2018 and January 2019. This information can be found at the link below: <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/home-affairs/Correspondence-17-19/19-03-05-Letter-from-Sir-Philip-Rutnam-KCB-Permanent-Secretary-Home-Office-Migrant-boats-in-the-channel.pdf>

The department does not routinely publish breakdowns of asylum claims by method of arrival or type of claim. This information is recorded but not in a format that can easily be retrieved and could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

The Home Office does publish data on the number of applications for asylum in the UK, in its quarterly Immigration Statistics release, the latest release published 24th May 2019. The number of asylum applications for main applicants by country of nationality, made since January 2019 can be found in table as_01_q for main applicants: Latest edition available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2019/list-of-tables#asylum>

Since January, more than 50 people who arrived illegally in the UK in small boats have been returned to Europe.

■ **Asylum: China**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[279448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum the Home Office has received from Uighurs since 2015; and what proportion of those applications have been successful.

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[279450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of granting Uighur asylum seekers the automatic right to remain in the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office is unable to report on how many applications for asylum from Chinese Uighurs it has received since 2015; and what proportion of those applications have been successful, as to obtain this information would require a manual trawl of records and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. We do, however, publish data on those who have been granted asylum in the UK, with main applicants broken down by country of nationality. The latest release, published 24th May 2019, can be found in tab as_01 at volume 1 of the quarterly Immigration Statistics release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2019/list-of-tables#asylum>

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Where someone establishes a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm in their country they are normally granted protection and are not expected to return there.

Our assessment of the situation for Uighurs in China is set out in the relevant country policy and information note, which is available on the Gov.uk website

All asylum and human rights claims from Chinese nationals are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw.

■ Crimes of Violence: Prosecutions

Andrew Rosindell: [\[269684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions he has had with the Director of Public Prosecutions on ensuring more effective prosecutions of cases involving violent criminals.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Secretary has not met the Director of Public Prosecutions recently to discuss prosecutions of cases involving violent criminals.

However, an effective law enforcement and criminal justice response is a very important part of the Government's Serious Violence Strategy, and the Home Secretary and Ministers have regular discussions with senior police officers.

■ Domestic Abuse: Telephone Services

Jo Stevens: [\[276221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary for of State for the Home Department, what information he holds on the number of people who used the National Domestic Violence helpline in the last 12 months.

Victoria Atkins:

The National Domestic Violence Helpline provides a vital line of support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, their friends and families and supporting professionals. The 24-hour helpline is available 365 days a year to provide immediate and crisis support.

The most recent figures published show that to the year ending March 2018 94,549 calls were made to the helpline.

■ Fire Stations: Greater Manchester

Sir David Crausby: [\[278384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Ministers in his Department have held recent meetings with representatives of the Greater Manchester

Fire and Rescue Service on proposals to reduce the number of fire stations and engines in the Manchester city region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Nick Hurd:

I refer my Hon Friend to the answer given to him on 21 February 2019, UIN 222621.

Operational decisions are for each fire and rescue authority to make as part of the integrated risk management planning process. The authority is best placed to act on the professional advice of their Chief Fire Officer.

■ **Free Movement of People**

Tom Brake:

[\[279357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether freedom of movement for EU nationals to and from the UK will end if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Caroline Nokes:

The Government has been clear that freedom of movement will end after the UK leaves the European Union. If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, it will end when the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill is commenced following Royal Assent.

■ **Harassment: EU Nationals**

Jo Stevens:

[\[276220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of verbal and physical harassment of non-UK EU citizens in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

Data on the nationality of victims of crime is not centrally collected by the Home Office. However, police forces are free to collect this information locally.

The police may treat verbal and physical harassment of non-UK EU citizens as racially-motivated hate crimes. The Government has a robust response to all forms of hate crime. This includes a range of relevant legislation, and the Hate Crime Action Plan 2016-20. The Action Plan includes a number of commitments organised under the themes of preventing hate crime, tackling hate crime, increasing reporting, supporting victims and increasing our understanding of hate crime.

■ **Hate Crime: LGBT People**

Ian Lavery:

[\[272837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes.

Victoria Atkins:

Hate crime of any kind is completely unacceptable. In October 2018 the Government refreshed the Action Against Hate to ensure that it is still fit for purpose to tackle hate crime including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse.

The Action Plan includes a number of commitments that are addressing all forms of hate crime, including a review of hate crime legislation by the Law Commission which commenced earlier this year, a public awareness campaign which has run twice, and the Online Harms White Paper consultation.

There are also a number of specific commitments addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime, which have been informed by the Government's 2018 LGBT Action Plan. These include: the Crown Prosecution Service working with partners to improve the recording and monitoring of equalities data for LGBT victims of hate crime and reviewing and refreshing its LGBT Hate Crime Schools Pack; further Government Equalities Office funding for anti-bullying interventions in schools from March 2019 to March 2020; support from the Home Office to the police to improve training in responding to victims; multiple Home Office funded projects aimed at tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime; and continued engagement with LGBT stakeholders.

■ Home Office: Credit Unions

Gareth Thomas:

[\[279371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July 2019 to Question 271345, for what reasons his Department does not offer a payroll deduction service to enable employees to join a credit union; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office will be looking at Financial Wellbeing and the possibility of providing more financial education services for their staff over the next 12-18 month period.

This will include considering the option of providing access to payroll deduction schemes for our staff to be able to use credit unions.

■ Home Office: Ethnic Groups

Seema Malhotra:

[\[279052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many BAME staff are employed at (a) grade 7, (b) grade 5 and (c) grade 3 in his Department.

Victoria Atkins:

For the purposes of this answer, Senior Civil Service (SCS) Pay Band 1 has been treated as equivalent to Grade 5 and SCS Pay Band 2 and Director General have been treated as Grade 3.

At 30 June 2019, there are currently the following staff in the Home Office who have declared their ethnicity as BAME:

GRADE	NUMBER OF BAME STAFF
Grade 7	309
Grade 5	15

GRADE	NUMBER OF BAME STAFF
Grade 3	2

Data Source: Adelphi – Home Office Human Resources Record System

Period covered: As at 30 June 2019

Employee coverage: The data is based on headcount of paid, permanent Civil Servants who were current as at 30 June 2019.

■ Human Trafficking: Victim Support Schemes

Alex Norris: [\[273829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 2 July 2019 Free Movement news item entitled Government to drop 45-day time limit on support for trafficking victims, whether he plans to bring forward proposals on providing subsistence for people in the National Referral Mechanism who are (a) in outreach support, (b) in non-catered safe house accommodation, (c) in catered safe house accommodation and (d) in National Asylum Support Service accommodation for as long as their individual needs require.

Alex Norris: [\[273830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 2 July 2019 Free Movement news item entitled Government to drop 45-day time limit on support for trafficking victims, what the timeframe is for implementing his Department's aim for a new needs-based system which is both consistent with legal obligations and sustainable in the longer-term.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to stamping out modern slavery and providing victims with the support they need to rebuild their lives.

We are always working to improve our understanding of the complex needs of victims of modern slavery and to improve the support available.

In October 2017, Government announced an ambitious package of reforms to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – our system for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. We have already made significant progress in delivering this complex reform programme.

We will now make further improvements to this offer – including embedding a needs-based approach to support – to better tailor support services to the needs of victims. The specific details and timeline associated with this work is being developed.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Ian Murray:

[\[279451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on people applying to the EU Settlement Scheme of charges issued by private operators for biometric services.

Caroline Nokes:

All applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme will be able to submit their biometric photograph via their online application. There is no charge for this.

Family members who are not EEA or Swiss nationals and do not already hold a Biometric Residence Card will also need to enrol a biometric photograph and fingerprints, excluding children who are 4 years old and under - they do not need to enrol fingerprints. The Home Office estimates that only a small cohort (less than 5%) of the overall EU Settlement Scheme cohort will need to submit their biometrics fingerprints.

When required, biometric fingerprint enrolment will take place at one of 57 UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) centres across the UK, run by Sopra Steria, our commercial partner. Six of the locations can be used without any appointment charge being incurred. The remaining locations attract an appointment charge of £60 at an enhanced service point or £200 for the premium lounge in London. Additional charges also apply at each of the 57 sites for out of hours appointments. It is a matter for the customer to decide which location to attend.

Our commercial partner, Sopra Steria, undertook market research to identify service locations; their research included the impact on customers of travel time, cost and accessibility. The 6 core service centres that offer free appointments have been sized and located based on projected customer footfall information, providing coverage for customers across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The majority of the service point locations are situated in town and city centres and close to transport links and 62% of customers will, on average, have to travel less than 25 miles to visit a core service centre, with 78% travelling less than 50 miles.

■ Knives: Crime

Ben Bradley:

[\[275241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the operation of the Anti-knife Crime Community Fund in (a) 2017-18 and (b) 2018-19.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office anti-knife crime Community Fund provided support for community organisations for early intervention and prevention projects through awarding small grants in 2017-18 and 2018-19. In 2017-18 it funded 47 projects totalling £1million across England and Wales. It was increased to £1.5million in 2018/19 and supported 68 projects and initial assessments show that the projects have reached at least

50,000 children and young people. We are ensuring that the funding is used effectively, and Home Office officials have conducted a series of visits to projects in order to be satisfied about effective delivery. On 26 June, we launched the third year of the Fund for 2019-20 and the deadline for bids is 24 July.

■ **Local Government: Asylum**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[280223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to help councils (a) accommodate and (b) process asylum seekers.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office ensures that asylum seekers, who would otherwise be destitute, are provided with accommodation and a weekly cash allowance.

This includes free, furnished accommodation, and we also cover utility costs and provide individuals with a cash allowance to cover other essential living needs. The level of the allowance is reviewed each year.

■ **Migrant Workers: Proof of Identity**

Keith Vaz: [\[280125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans he has to introduce digital IDs for migrants seeking to work in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Keith Vaz: [\[280126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the estimated cost is of introducing a digital ID system for migrants seeking to work in the UK.

Keith Vaz: [\[280127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans he has to increase the use of algorithm-based software in the determination of immigration status for migrants seeking to (a) work and (b) visit the UK.

Caroline Nokes:

The Home Office has no plans to introduce digital IDs for migrants seeking to work in the UK. However, as set out in the Government's White Paper on the future skills-based immigration system published on 19 December 2018, individuals will use online services to demonstrate their immigration status to employers, landlords and other service providers. These online services will enable individuals to view an online record of their immigration status held by the Home Office, and to share it with others, securely and in real time. Online services are being rolled out now to those who hold a biometric residence document, and those who apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

A decision on an individual's immigration status is determined by suitably trained Home Office staff. To ensure that applications for leave to remain and enter are processed as efficiently as possible, UK Visas and Immigration digitally streams

applications to the relevant team. Streaming does not determine the outcome of an application; rather it ensures appropriate checks are made against requirements of the Immigration Rules by suitably-trained decision makers. The streaming system drives efficiency by ensuring decision makers have the relevant applications as quickly as possible. It is regularly updated to reflect any changes in policy. Online status services simply surface information based on the immigration product an individual has already been granted.

■ Police

Alberto Costa: [\[280281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Police Covenant will be introduced.

Mr Nick Hurd:

On 18 July the Home Secretary announced his intention to establish a police covenant demonstrating his recognition of the bravery and commitment of police officers.

The Home Office will work with policing partners and other government departments over the coming months to develop more detailed proposals. This will be followed by a public consultation on the principle and scope of the police covenant in due course.

■ Police: Wandsworth

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[280452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of police officers in the Borough of Wandsworth in (a) 2010 and (b) 2018.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The number of police officers in the Borough of Wandsworth is not collected centrally as the Home Office only collects this information at Police Force Area (PFA) level only.

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of police officers employed by each police force in England and Wales on a bi-annual basis. These data are published in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletins.

Data on the number of police officers in each PFA as at 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2019 can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817734/open-data-table-police-workforce.ods

■ Private Rented Housing: Fires

Andrew Gwynne: [\[280205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of domestic fires in the private rented sector in England that have occurred as a result of (a) smoking and (b) electrical fires since 2015.

Mr Nick Hurd:

The Home Office does not collect this information. Data on electrical fires and those caused by smoking are available in tables 6.02 and 6.05 here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#cause-of-fire> but we do not collect information on the tenure of the property in which the fire took place.

Prostitution**Sarah Champion:****[275757]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July to Question 269826, what data his Department collects on the number of sexually exploited people supported by his Department to exit prostitution.

Victoria Atkins:

This information is not collected centrally. We believe that people who want to leave prostitution should be given every opportunity to find routes out. The Government's priority is to protect those selling sex from harm and exploitation and target those who exploit vulnerable people involved in prostitution.

Since 2016, we have provided over £2m to organisations supporting sex workers, this includes £650,000 through the Violence Against Women and Girls Service Transformation Fund to Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner to provide a victim-focused service for sex workers who are victims, or at risk, of sexual or domestic violence and abuse, exploitation or human trafficking.

The Tampon Tax Fund has also been used to provide specialist support to sex workers. Since 2016 we have also provided £389,000 of funding which has been awarded to four specialist organisations supporting women to exit prostitution: One25; Street Talk; Women at the Well; and the Magdalene Group.

In March 2017, £595,917 was also awarded via the Tampon Tax Fund to three organisations working with women involved in prostitution: Brighton Oasis Project; the Joanna Project and WM Consortium Sexual Violence Providers.

Additionally, in 2018, Camden Council was awarded £398,000 through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government £20m fund to support women with chaotic lifestyles, including those involved in prostitution.

Radicalism: Germany**Lyn Brown:****[274498]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his Department's policies of the German Government's investigations into extremist networks in its police forces, armed forces, and security services.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government takes the threat from all forms of extremism seriously. We undertake a large number of assessments of the threat, including analysis of links between extremist groups overseas and those in the United Kingdom. The Counter-Extremism strategy addresses the issue of extremists targeting our institutions and recognises the need to work with our international partners to tackle extremism.

■ **Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence****Alex Norris:**[\[277825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many responses his Department has received to the call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop workers which closed on 28 June.

Victoria Atkins:

On 5 April the Home Office launched a call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop staff, which ran for 12 weeks and closed on 28 June.

We have received over 800 responses which are currently being reviewed. We will publish our response as swiftly as possible in the Autumn.

■ **Slavery****Vernon Coaker:**[\[R\] \[277641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he has taken in response to the April 2019 High Court judgment on the 45 day limit for support for victims of modern slavery; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

This Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery and ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives

We are always building our understanding of the complex needs of victims of modern slavery and striving to improve the support available. This case has highlighted the importance of tailoring support according to the individual needs of victims and, in response, we will be embedding a more needs-based approach in our services.

In October 2017, Government announced an ambitious package of reforms to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – our system for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. We have already made significant progress in delivering this complex reform programme and we will continue to drive improvements to the services available to ensure they are meeting the recovery needs of victims.

■ Synthetic Cannabinoids: Misuse

Ben Bradley:

[\[280381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the penalties incurred for (a) possession and (b) supply and production of synthetic cannabinoids.

Mr Nick Hurd:

Synthetic cannabinoids are controlled as Class B drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. There is a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, or both for possession of a Class B drug and 14 years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, or both, for the supply and production of a Class B drug.

There was a total of 281 convictions for the principal offence of possession of synthetic cannabinoids in 2018, up from 71 convictions in 2017 and no convictions in 2016. For the principal offences of either supply, possession with intent to supply or production of synthetic cannabinoids there were 18 convictions in 2018, up from 4 convictions in 2017 and 4 convictions in 2016.

The Government has commissioned the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to provide an updated harms assessment on their previous reports on synthetic cannabinoids. The commission also seeks recommendations on whether the current classification under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 of synthetic cannabinoids is appropriate. The advice is due in summer 2020. The full commission has been published online on the gov.uk website. The Government will await the ACMD's further advice and recommendations

■ Vacancies

Ian Lavery:

[\[278505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to reduce the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU without a deal on labour shortages.

Caroline Nokes:

Leaving the EU with a deal remains the Government's top priority. This has not changed. However, a responsible government must plan for every eventuality, including a no deal scenario.

As laid out in the policy paper 'Immigration from 31 October 2019, if there is no deal' published on the 28 January 2019, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal there will be a transition period, once free movement has ended and before the UK's new skills-based immigration system begins on 1 January 2021.

Arrangements for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens arriving after free movement ends, coming to visit, work or study, for the duration of less than three months, will not look any different.

To stay longer than three months during the transition period, newly arrived EU citizens will need to apply for European Temporary Leave to Remain, which lasts for a further 36 months. Those who want to stay in the UK beyond the granted 36

months will need to apply and qualify under the new skills-based immigration system, which will start to come into effect, deal or no deal, from 2021.

The future system will focus on skills and not nationality, welcoming talented and hardworking individuals who will support the UK's dynamic economy, enabling business and employers to continue to compete on the world stage.

■ Youth Endowment Fund

Vicky Foxcroft:

[279453]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which local authorities have applied for a grant from the youth endowment fund.

Victoria Atkins:

The Youth Endowment Fund has been established to operate independently of Government and publishes information about its activities here:

<https://impetus.org.uk/youth-endowment-fund>. The Youth Endowment Fund has launched a first call for proposals.

This is an open call, to fund and evaluate interventions primarily targeting young people aged 10-14 who are at risk of being drawn into crime and violence.

This first funding round is due to close on the 23 July. Once closed, the Youth Endowment Fund will collate and release figures on the number of applicants and will include breakdowns for geography and the different categories of applicants. These will be published on their website at the end of this week

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme

Justin Madders:

[279075]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many complaints have been made against Members since the introduction of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme.

Tom Brake:

Proactive quarterly publication of statistics, related to the Independent Grievance and Complaints Scheme, are published on Parliament's website. Where there are fewer than 10 cases, the exact number is not published in order to maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved. More detailed breakdown of statistics, as recommended in the Alison Stanley six-month review, are currently being collated. This includes complaints made by user groups, e.g. against MPs, House staff, MPs' staff. This information will be reviewed and published with the next quarterly statistics in mid-October, whilst ensuring that the confidentiality of those concerned is maintained.

Justin Madders:

[\[279076\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many complaints against Members have been resolved since the introduction of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme.

Tom Brake:

Proactive quarterly publication of statistics related to the independent grievance and complaints scheme, are published on Parliament's website. Where there are fewer than 10 cases, the exact number is not published in order to maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved. More detailed breakdown of statistics, as recommended in the Alison Stanley six-month review, are currently being collated and will include the number of complaints that have been resolved. This information will be reviewed and published with the next quarterly statistics in mid-October, whilst ensuring that the confidentiality of those concerned is maintained.

■ **Members' Staff: Working Conditions**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[277112\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, what plans the Commission has to improve the working conditions for Members' staff.

Tom Brake:

[Holding answer 18 July 2019]: Members' staff are regularly consulted on service issues by House authorities. These consultations include regular meetings between House staff and MPs' staff representative bodies, and invitations to focus groups to feed into service design. A sample of Members' staff have also recently been surveyed on how effective the services provided by the House are for them. There is also an annual meeting between House staff and MPs' staff bodies (specifically Members and Peers Staff Association and Unite) at which service issues can be raised.

More recently, the House of Commons Commission has discussed the Gemma White review, and it welcomed the broad thrust of the recommendations made, which included better HR services for Members' staff and how the sense of isolation that they feel can be addressed. They have asked the House Administration to carry out further work to examine the practical steps that can be taken in response to it.

Terms and conditions of service for Members' staff fall within the remit of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Antisocial Behaviour****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[278439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to help local communities tackle anti-social behaviour.

Rishi Sunak:

The current 2015-20 Troubled Families Programme is designed to achieve improved outcomes in crime and anti-social behaviour as well as wider drivers of crime including education and employment.

According to the Troubled Families Programme's 2019 family survey, fewer respondents reported contact with the police, and fewer reported police or landlord action as a result of involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour.

In the Social Housing Green Paper, "A new deal for social housing" we sought views on how landlords work with local partners to tackle anti-social behaviour. We also asked what key performance indicator could be used to measure this work.

We are currently considering the responses to the Green Paper consultation and our action plan and timetable for implementing wide-ranging reforms will be published in September.

■ Bellwin Scheme: Greater Manchester**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[280210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has provided funds through the Bellwin scheme to the Greater Manchester combined authority since July 2018.

James Brokenshire:

The Department has not provided any funding through the Bellwin scheme to the Greater Manchester combined authority since July 2018. However, in partnership with the Home Office, it has provided funding through a separate grant mechanism (section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003) for the additional costs incurred by Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in 2018-19 dealing with the Moorland Fires.

■ Building Regulations: Air Pollution**Jim Shannon:**[\[280241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department's review of ventilation and energy-efficiency in building regulations includes indoor air quality; and whether the future homes standard will include benchmarking on indoor air quality.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

In the Government's Clean Air Strategy 2019, we committed to consulting on changes to standards in Part F (ventilation) of the Building Regulations, as part of our

2019 consultation on the Building Regulations' energy efficiency standards. The statutory guidance for Part F (Approved Document F) describes how buildings in urban areas should be designed to reduce the intake of pollutants. In this review we are using the latest evidence on indoor air quality to inform ventilation standards.

The Future Homes Standard will be implemented through an uplift to the Building Regulations, subject to consultation. We will expand on the technical detail of these proposals during the 2019 consultation.

■ Buildings and Housing: Standards

Jim Shannon:

[\[280242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to (a) establish a sub-committee of the Housing Taskforce to include stakeholders involved in the delivery of healthy and quality homes and (b) respond to the recommendations made in the all-party Parliamentary group for healthy homes and buildings white paper, published 24 October 2018.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

This Government is committed to improving housing standards. Ministers have engaged with the APPG for Healthy Homes and Buildings, following the publication of their White Paper in October and have noted the Paper's recommendations. We will continue to engage with the APPG and related stakeholders as we develop policy to build their views into policy. The Department has seen the number of private rented homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard fall 15 per cent since 2010 – a record low. We have also seen the number of social homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard decrease significantly. Our Department has also dedicated a chapter in The revised National Planning and Policy Framework includes a dedicated chapter on the creation of healthy and safe places. We have also launched the Social Housing Green Paper which asks if we should consider what constitutes a decent home.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[279428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 18 July 2019 to Question 268565 on Buildings: Insulation, if his Department will publish video footage of the BS 8414 test or tests on high pressure laminate cladding carried out on his Department's behalf by the Fire Protection Association.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Department published on 18 July 2019 the test report and classification report. These reports contain the data gathered during the test as well as photographs taken before, during and after the test. This provides fuller information on the test than video footage.

These are available at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-test-report-mhclg-bs-8414-hpl>

■ Carbon Monoxide: Poisoning

Andrew Rosindell:

[278436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to protect homes from the risk of unacceptably high levels of carbon monoxide.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Government takes the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in the home seriously and is taking steps to raise awareness of and tackle these risks. A summary of Government activities can be seen at www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/cross-government-group.htm.

We have introduced regulation where this is sensible and proportionate to do so. Our building regulations require the safe installation of heating appliances and our gas safety regulations require landlords to carry out annual gas safety checks. We are also reviewing regulations for carbon monoxide alarms and will set out our response to this review and the way forward alongside our response to the Social Housing Green Paper.

■ Community Relations and Radicalism

Andrew Gwynne:

[280208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information his Department has provided directly to the public to help (a) understand the threat from extremism and (b) promote integration; and whether such information has been made available in languages other than English.

Rishi Sunak:

The Government published the *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper* in March 2018, inviting views on our vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. In February 2019, we published the *Integrated Communities Action Plan* alongside the Government's response to the consultation on the Green Paper. This set out the actions that Government will take to create socially and economically stronger, more confident and integrated communities. These documents were published in English.

Assisting the public to understand the threat from extremism is the responsibility of the Home Office. The independent Commission for Countering Extremism published the findings from their call for evidence earlier this month, which was the first public consultation on extremism. The Commission's full study into the threat we face from extremism and the current response, including advice on new policies to tackle it, will be published in the autumn in English and Welsh.

■ Community Relations: Religion

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[280207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what grants his Department has made to (a) Muslim, (b) Jewish, (c) Christian, and (d) inter-faith organisations to support integration and community cohesion, by organisation, in each year since May 2015.

Rishi Sunak:

A range of funding has been identified with is focussed on enabling Muslim, Jewish, Christian and inter-faith organisations to support integration and community cohesion, since May 2015:

PROJECTS	ORGANISATIONS	2015/16 (£000s)	2016/17 (£000s)	2017/18 (£000s)	2018/19 (£000s)	TOTAL
Expanding Bridges not Boycotts	B'nai Brith Hillel 0 Foundation (Jewish)		31	50		81
Holocaust Memorial Day	Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (Jewish)	980	980	1,150	1,146	4,256
Inter Faith Network (IFN)	Inter Faith Network (inter-faith)	220	305	382	384	1,291
Jewish Muslim Network	Jewish Muslim Network (inter-faith)	5	0	0		5
Joseph Interfaith Foundation	Joseph Interfaith Foundation (inter-faith)		7	0		7
Near Neighbours 11-12 to 13-14	Church Urban Fund (Christian)	1500	1,710	2,150	1,882	7,242
Remembering Srebrenica	Umma Help (Muslim)	333	400	400	400	1,533
Solutions not Sides	One Voice Europe (inter-faith)	0	50	100		150

PROJECTS	ORGANISATIONS	2015/16 (£000s)	2016/17 (£000s)	2017/18 (£000s)	2018/19 (£000s)	TOTAL
Strengthening Faith Institutions	Fayre Share Foundation (inter-faith)	125	275	487	800	1,687
Tell Mama	Faith Matters (inter-faith)	182	504	829	892	2,406
Together in Service	Faith Action (inter-faith)	48	0	0		48
Tough Options	Forum for Discussion of Isarel & Palestine (inter-faith)	0			62	62
Nisa Nashim	Nisa Nashim (inter-faith)				30	30
70 Years on	Faiths Forum for London (inter-faith)		5	70		75

In addition the Department funds a range of projects to help build strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

■ Construction: Carbon Emissions

Dr David Drew:

[\[277627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the advice provided in the European Commission recommendations document EU 2019/1019, on reducing CO2 emissions, is distributed widely throughout the construction industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK will take account of these recommendations in implementing the requirements of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2018/844/EU.

The Directive will be implemented through revised legislation and associated guidance which will be published to help those affected, including the construction industry, to meet the new requirements.

■ Council Tax

Andrew Gwynne: [\[280200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many people who are (a) paying council tax for the first time and (b) paying higher council tax as a result of the changes to council tax on 1 April 2017 have received a court summons for non-payment as of 22 July 2019.

James Brokenshire:

The Department does not hold this information.

■ Crisis Loans

Wera Hobhouse: [\[279449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department policies of (a) the March 2019 The Children's Society report entitled Nowhere to turn and (B) the finding that since the devolution of crisis support in 2013, the number of people receiving crisis support from either national or local government has reduced by 75 per cent.

Rishi Sunak:

Local welfare provision was devolved to local authorities as the Government believes that they're best place to understand local priorities.

The Government has made over £200 billion available to councils over this spending review to spend on local services including local welfare provision.

■ Derelict Land: Regeneration

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[279437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to require local authorities to identify brownfield rather than green belt sites for development.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

In our revised National Planning Policy Framework we ask local authorities to give substantial weight to the value of re-using brownfield land, and to prioritise its redevelopment wherever possible. To assist redevelopment the Government offers loans for site preparation and infrastructure, and tax relief for land remediation; and we have introduced Permission in Principle to speed housing-led development at sites on local Registers of brownfield land.

By contrast, the Framework provides strong discouragement for needless loss of Green Belt. It makes clear that most types of new building are inappropriate in the Green Belt and should be refused planning permission. It also states that a Green Belt boundary may be adjusted only in exceptional circumstances, by means of the Local Plan revision process. At examination of a draft Plan the planning inspector will now look for evidenced justification of any Green Belt boundary change, to ensure

that all other reasonable options for accommodating the development have been explored.

Because each brownfield site is different, each often requires a tailored solution. The land may be in an unsustainable or unviable location for residential use, or unavailable, or in need of complicated remediation. It would be impracticable to prevent local authorities building the homes we need until all their brownfield is used up.

■ **Display Energy Certificates: Fixed Penalties**

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[280111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for not having a valid Display Energy Certificate under Energy Performance of Buildings Directive regulations.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

There is no requirement on Local Weights and Measures Authorities (LWMAs) to separately identify how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for not having a valid display energy certificate under Energy Performance of Buildings Directive regulations. Therefore the Department does not hold this information centrally but it may be available from individual LWMAs.

■ **Education: Poland**

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[277694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the ProjectPolish schools project on Poland.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is aware of the Project Polish schools project but we have made no assessment of its effectiveness.

■ **Energy Performance Certificates**

Jim Shannon: [\[280240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to extend Energy Performance Certificates to include information on the health and safety of properties.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

There are currently no plans to extend the scope of Energy Performance Certificates for buildings to include information about the health or safety of buildings.

■ Evictions

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[280235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his Department's definition is of eviction at short notice.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Statutory notice periods are set out in the Housing Act 1988.

If a landlord evicts a tenant under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, they must provide a notice period of two months – and they do not have to provide a reason for the eviction. This has resulted in some tenants feeling insecure in their properties, knowing that they could be asked to leave when the fixed-term has ended without being given an explanation.

The Government does not feel it is fair that people can be asked to leave a property without being given a valid reason and so it has committed to removing section 21 of the Housing Act 1988.

■ Green Belt: Housing

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[279438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps his Department has taken to protect the green belt from housing developments.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

In our National Planning Policy Framework, reissued in February 2019, we ask local authorities to protect their Green Belts, making clear that most types of new buildings are inappropriate there, and should be refused planning permission. The revised Framework now also states that a local authority can propose to alter a Green Belt boundary only in exceptional circumstances and only if it can show that it has examined all other reasonable options for meeting its identified development needs. A local authority should therefore make as much use as possible of suitable brownfield and under-used land; optimise density of development; and discuss with neighbouring authorities whether they could take some of the necessary development, as agreed in a Statement of Common Ground. As part of the rigorous examination of a draft Plan, the planning inspector will look for evidenced justification of any proposed change to a Green Belt, to check that reasonable alternatives have been explored.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Northamptonshire

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[280338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Health and Social Care on the proposed pilot scheme merger of the provision of social care and health care in Northamptonshire under one new organisation.

Rishi Sunak:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, together with my officials, met Hon Friends from Northamptonshire on 22 July to discuss the integration between health and social care services in Northamptonshire. It was agreed that local leaders from across health and social care in Northamptonshire should be invited to set out clearly their ambitions for integration including formalised ways of working together. I and my fellow Ministers look forward to hearing more from Northamptonshire health bodies and councils when their plans are further developed.

■ Home Ownership: Young People

Andrew Gwynne: [\[280209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of young people who own their own home since 2010.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

In 2010-11 the proportion of under 35 year olds in owner occupation was 36 per cent; in 2017-18 the proportion was 33 per cent.

■ Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[280455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish an impact assessment of the effectiveness of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have committed to reviewing the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, including the resourcing of it and how it is working in practice for a wide group of people, by March 2020. We have published a call for evidence and are inviting all with an interest to respond by October 15 2019, and have commissioned ICF to undertake an independent review of how the Act has been implemented by different areas.

■ Hostels and Hotels: Insulation

Angela Smith: [\[272794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of hotels and hostels by local authority which are (a) below and (b) above 18 metres in height that have high pressure laminate cladding.

Angela Smith: [\[272795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of student accommodation blocks

(a) below and (b) above 18 metres in height in each local authority areas that have high pressure laminate cladding.

Angela Smith:

[\[272796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of hospitals by local authority which are (a) below and (b) above 18 metres in height that have high pressure laminate cladding.

Angela Smith:

[\[272797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of care homes by local authority which are (a) below and (b) above 18 metres in height that have high pressure laminate cladding.

Kit Malthouse:

The Department has commenced a data collection exercise which will enable us to build a picture of external wall systems in use on high rise residential buildings. This exercise will collect data on residential buildings 18 metres and over covering private and social buildings, student accommodation and hotels.

■ Housing Act 1996

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[280234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of Section 21 of the Housing Act 1996 on a landlord's ability to evict tenants responsible for (a) persistent non-payment of rent and (b) anti-social behaviour.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Housing Act 1988 already contains grounds for eviction that allow the landlord to seek possession of the property in the event of non-payment of rent and anti-social behaviour.

The Government consultation on tenancy reform was published 21 July 2019. In light of the Government's intention to remove section 21, this consultation asks for views on strengthening the existing ground covering rent arrears and seeks more evidence on how landlords use the existing grounds for anti-social behaviour.

■ Housing: Construction

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[278440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to improve building (a) standards and (b) quality throughout the country.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We are currently consulting on the design and delivery of a New Homes Ombudsman. We are also reforming the building safety system, reviewing the Approved Documents to the Building Regulations and working with industry to improve productivity and skills, all of which will raise building standards.

Housing: Immigrants**Ian Lavery:**[\[278504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a decrease in the number of people immigrating to the UK after the UK leaves the EU on house prices.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Office of Budget Responsibility is responsible for monitoring macro-economic conditions, including house price changes, and produces short term forecasts based on leading indicators and medium-term forecasts informed by their house price model. The Department uses these forecasts to inform policy. We remain committed to delivering safe, secure and affordable housing to people across the country. Our exit from the EU will not change this priority. A key pillar of realising this commitment is our ambition to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s.

Housing: Rural Areas**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[278438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to encourage development of traditionalist villages similar to the Poundbury Estate near Dorchester.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We are very supportive of the Garden City principles, having recently welcomed the addition of a further 25 garden towns and villages onto the Garden Communities programme to be exemplars of high quality, good design and best practice. To date, we have provided over £38 million in capacity funding to assist the places to deliver against their ambitious proposals.

The Government has also convened the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission to advise on practical measures that will help ensure new housing developments and neighborhoods meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed. The Commission published their interim report earlier this month on 9 July.

Housing: Standards**Chuka Umunna:**[\[279008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people living in

accommodation that is unsuitable for their health needs or disabilities in (a) Greater London (b) the London Borough of Lambeth and (c) England.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Department does not hold estimates of the number of people living in accommodation that is unsuitable for their health needs or disabilities throughout the UK, in Greater London or in the London Borough of Lambeth

However, the Department publishes national statistics on social housing that is owned and managed by local authorities in England. Every local authority is required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and the procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation. The scheme must be framed so that reasonable preference can be given to key vulnerable groups

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/local-authority-housing-statistics-data-returns-for-2017-to-2018>

Jim Shannon:

[280243]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to review the UK's existing housing stock to ensure that the oldest homes are fit for purpose and do not exacerbate or cause ill health.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Department has seen the number of private rented homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard fall 15 per cent since 2010 – a record low. We have also seen the number of social homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard decrease significantly.

Local authorities have powers under the Housing Act 2004 to review the Private Rented Sector stock and to tackle poor rented property conditions which may impact peoples' health. They must take enforcement action where the most serious (category 1) hazards are present - this is usually assessed through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

In October 2018 the Government launched a scoping review to consider whether the HHSRS should be updated and, if so, to what extent. This review has now reported, and I announced that there will be a comprehensive overhaul of the HHSRS to begin later this year.

In addition, the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act, which came into force on 20th March 2019, empowers tenants to take their landlords to court if they fail to address health and safety hazards. We have also launched the Social Housing Green Paper which asks if we should consider what constitutes a decent home.

■ **Local Government: Press Releases**

Andrew Gwynne:

[280201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on how many occasions his Department has issued draft press releases to local authorities for completion using local statistics since May 2015.

James Brokenshire:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Manufacturing Industries**

Frank Field:[\[277651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of adopting land-use industrial policy measures to support specific clusters within the manufacturing industry.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Government recognises the role that planning policy plays in supporting business investment, expansion and adaptation, which is why the revised National Planning Policy Framework is clear that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including clusters where appropriate.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Computer Software**

Andrew Gwynne:[\[280203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much his Department spent on software licences in (a) 2016, (b) 2017 and (c) 2018.

James Brokenshire:

The table below sets out the Department's spend on software licences as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND (NEAREST £000S INC VAT)
2016/17	762
2017/18	1,102
2018/19	2,422

The increase in 2018/19 is mainly due to the modernisation of key elements of the MHCLG IT services which amounted to £1,322k as part of the roll-out of the IT Modernisation Programme.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Disclosure of Information**

Andrew Gwynne:[\[280199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many compromise agreements were agreed with staff leaving his Department in the last 12 months; how many such agreements contained confidentiality clauses; and what the value of severance and pension payments associated with those agreements was.

James Brokenshire:

The Department has not entered into any compromise agreements with staff leaving in the last 12 months.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Information Officers**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[280198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many (a) press officers, (b) internal communications officers, (c) external communications officers, (d) communications strategy staff and (e) any other communications staff were employed by his Department in 2018-19; and what the total cost of their salaries and any on-costs was in that period.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Communications directorate within MHCLG consists of two divisions – External Communications and Corporate Communications.

The total staff costs for External Communications in 18-19 was £1.53 million. External Communications consisted of 21 staff in post at April 2018 and 29 staff in post at March 2019. Staff in this division include press officers/external communications officers and management.

The total staff costs for Corporate Communications in 18-19 was £1.76 million. Corporate Communications consisted of 31 staff in post at April 2018 and 35 staff in post at March 2019. Staff in this division include internal communications officers, communications strategy staff and management.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Living Wage**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[280196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether all directly employed staff in his Department are paid at least the living wage.

James Brokenshire:

There are no staff who are paid below the living wage of £8.21 in the Department.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Parliamentary Questions**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[280211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on how many occasions his Department has transferred (a) a written parliamentary and (b) an oral parliamentary Question to a different answering Department since July 2018.

James Brokenshire:

Departmental records indicate that between 1 July 2018 and 22 July 2019 (a) 320 written parliamentary questions and (b) 3 oral parliamentary questions were transferred to a different answering body.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Staff**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[280206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of his Department's staff, excluding non-departmental public bodies, are (a) women in senior management posts, (b) women, (c) black and minority ethnic and (d) disabled.

James Brokenshire:

The below figures are all taken at 30/06/2019

A) The proportion of women currently in senior management posts (Deputy Director level and above) is 54.7 per cent

B) The proportion of women in the Department is 51.8 per cent

C) The table below gives the figures for black and minority ethnic staff, the calculations exclude any staff who have not disclosed their ethnicity information, the declaration rate is 77.4 per cent.

MHCLG TOTAL

% Black and Minority Ethnic	20.8%
% White	79.2%
MHCLG Total	100.0%

D) The table below gives the figures for Disabled staff within the Department the calculations exclude any staff who have not disclosed their ethnicity information, the declaration rate is 73.1%.

MHCLG TOTAL

Disabled	10.1%
Not Disabled	89.9%
MHCLG Total	100.0%

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Temporary Employment**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[280197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which agencies supply staff working in his Department.

James Brokenshire:

MHCLG engage any agency or contractor staff through the Public Sector Resourcing framework and all agencies must be signed up to that framework. This service is

provided through Alexander Mann Solutions. There is one exception to this where we have engaged Hays to support bringing in finance expertise on a short time basis.

■ **Owner Occupation: Service Charges**

Andrea Leadsom: [\[280309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to protect freeholders and leaseholders from high service charges.

Andrea Leadsom: [\[280310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle uncapped service charges on freeholders and leaseholders.

Andrea Leadsom: [\[280311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure accountability and transparency in service charges.

Andrea Leadsom: [\[280312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure fairness between freeholders and leaseholders on challenging high service charges.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have committed to protecting leaseholders who are suffering at the hands of rogue managing agents every day from unexpected costs or excessive fees for poor quality repairs.

We set up a working group, chaired by Lord Best, to look at regulating and professionalising property agents. This included reviewing the standards around the transparency of service charges and other fees and charges, how they are presented to consumers and putting them into a statutory code for managing agents. The working group has now completed their considerations and made recommendations to ministers. The working group's final report was published on 18 July.

The Government will consider the recommendations set out in the report and will respond in due course

We are also looking at the future use of charges and restrictions beyond service charges – such as permission fees, administration charges and other restrictions and covenants faced by leaseholders and resident freeholders, and consider whether they should be capped or banned, and will consider this alongside the working group's proposals.

The Government has committed to ensuring that residential freeholders who pay charges for the maintenance of communal areas and facilities on a private or mixed tenure estate can access equivalent rights to those of leaseholders to challenge their

reasonableness. This will include a right to change the provider of maintenance services by applying to the tribunal for the appointment of a new manager.

■ **Public Buildings: Display Energy Certificates**

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[280110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the trends in the level of non-compliance with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive regulations, for the requirement to have a valid Display Energy Certificate across all public buildings.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Government does not routinely hold or collect data to identify public buildings that are frequently visited by the public. Therefore, we have not made an assessment of the current levels of non-compliance in relation to display energy certificates.

■ **Rented Housing**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[278966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make the sub-letting of residential property a criminal offence.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

There are no plans to legislate in this area.

■ **Roads: Construction**

Andrea Leadsom: [\[280313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that developers are accountable to local authorities when appointing sub-contractors to build roads and other infrastructure; and what powers local authorities have to ensure that developers contribute adequately to the cost of maintaining roads once adopted by the local authority.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and section 106 contributions can be used to provide and maintain roads and other infrastructure. Our recent reforms enable local authorities to hold developers to account when infrastructure is provided as part of new development. Where developers do not deliver on contributions, this can be enforced through legal proceedings.

■ **Temporary Accommodation: Standards**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[280456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of people living in temporary accommodation; and what steps he is taking to improve the living conditions of those people.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The total number of households living in temporary accommodation, provided by local authorities under their statutory homelessness duties is 83,700 as at the 31 December 2018.

Homelessness is a big priority for the government. In the rough sleeping strategy, the previous Secretary of State indicated the Government is committed to taking steps to tackle wider homelessness issues, including the numbers of families in Temporary Accommodation (TA) and poor-quality accommodation.

The Government has targeted funding streams focused on reducing the number of households in TA as part of our £1.2 billion spending programme. Earlier this year, we announced £19.5 million for 54 projects through the Private Rented Sector Access Fund that will enable thousands of households to be supported away from TA and into long term Private Rented accommodation.

We have also committed £37.8 million of funding to launch the London Collaboration Project (Capital Letters) - a project which works with London boroughs to improve the supply of homes, reduce the cost to local authorities of procuring these homes and achieve better outcomes for homeless families through a centralised procurement process.

We are working with other government departments to assess what more can be done to address the number of people in TA. This work is being overseen by the Ministerial Taskforce on homelessness and rough sleeping. This may result in joint Spending Review bids to address the issues of homelessness as well as its causes and consequences. We will consider the potential to publish a wider cross government action plan on homelessness in the future, which will build on the work we already have in train, ensure progress is made on wider issues relating to all forms of homelessness and homelessness prevention'

■ Unitary Councils: Northamptonshire**Andrea Leadsom:**[\[280314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to (a) ensure that local authorities in Northamptonshire transition successfully to the two new unitary authorities on time and on budget and (b) prepare for the proposed new unitary authorities not being operational on time and on budget.

Rishi Sunak:

The Secretary of State made his decision to implement the Northamptonshire councils' unitary proposal with one modification. This modification was to extend the period for implementing the new arrangements so the new councils are operational from 1 April 2021. We took this step to ensure a successful transition to the two new unitary authorities and that there would be confidence locally about a safe and effective transition to all the new service delivery arrangements across the whole of the area, including for those crucial services supporting the most vulnerable.

■ Welfare Assistance Schemes**Catherine McKinnell:** [\[279417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the amount of funding that will be allocated to local welfare assistance provision in the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020-21.

Rishi Sunak:

Proposals for the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21, including provision for local welfare assistance, will be finalised following the outcome of the planned Spending Review.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Africa House London****Mary Creagh:** [\[279401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his Department has provided support to Africa House London Ltd.

Graham Stuart:

Each year, the Department for International Trade supports thousands of UK businesses and hundreds of business associations and chambers across every corner of the globe. To protect the confidentiality of businesses working with us, we do not publicly state whether or not we are working with an individual company at any given time.

■ Department for International Trade: Africa Trade**Mary Creagh:** [\[279400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether his Department has provided support to Africa Trade Ltd.

Graham Stuart:

Each year, the Department for International Trade supports thousands of UK businesses and hundreds of business associations and chambers across every corner of the globe. To protect the confidentiality of businesses working with us, we do not publicly state whether or not we are working with an individual company at any given time.

■ Tradeshow Access Programme**Bill Esterson:** [\[279479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he has taken to engage with businesses in order to assess their levels of satisfaction with the Tradeshow Access Programme.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade has commissioned a new Client Survey that measures the quality and impact of DIT's products and services. As part of this, satisfaction scores will be produced for the Tradeshow Access Programme with the intention to publish the first findings in early 2020.

JUSTICE**■ Family Courts: Domestic Abuse****Suella Braverman:**[\[278552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will launch an independent inquiry into family courts in England and Wales to establish (a) how victims of domestic violence are treated, (b) whether the process under which parents convicted of domestic violence are given access to children is adequate and (c) whether the courts should be more transparent in their handling of domestic violence cases and the protection of children involved in such cases.

Paul Maynard:

On 21 May 2019 the Ministry of Justice announced a public call for evidence to develop our understanding of how the family courts protect children and parents in cases of domestic abuse and other serious offences. Specifically, the call for evidence will focus on the application of Practice Direction 12J, Practice Direction 3AA, The Family Procedure Rules Part 3A, and s.91(14) orders, and will build a more detailed understanding of any harm caused during or following proceedings in the family court where there are allegations of domestic abuse. The written call for evidence was launched on 19 July and will run for 6 weeks.

This call for evidence is coordinated by a panel of experts whose membership includes academics, members of the judiciary, and representatives from third sector bodies which represent or advocate for victims of domestic abuse, all of whom are independent of the Government. The panel will gather and interpret evidence from a full range of interested parties, to enable us to address appropriately any issues with the application of protections available in the family courts.

It is important that the Family Justice System strikes an appropriate balance between rightly protecting the confidentiality of the individual children and family members, but also maintaining as open and transparent approach to court decisions as possible in these circumstances.

■ Magistrates**Richard Burgon:**[\[278555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the advertisement seeking to recruit Leadership Magistrates; and in what locations that advert was made publicly available.

Richard Burgon: [\[278556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether a diversity monitoring form was included for completion for people applying to be a Leadership Magistrate.

Paul Maynard:

This is a matter for the judiciary. Any information concerning such appointments is held by the judiciary, not the Lord Chancellor. The judiciary have confirmed that the advertisement was published on the Judicial Intranet.

■ **Magistrates' Courts: Greater London**

Philip Davies: [\[278938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July to Question 273766 on Magistrates' Courts: Greater London, what the utilisation rates were for the adult courts only.

Paul Maynard:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service does not differentiate adult and youth work for the purposes of calculating court utilisation. This information is not held.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Working Hours**

Jon Trickett: [\[278381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much time off in lieu has been taken by staff in his Department in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) does not hold any central data on the amount of time off in lieu taken by employees in each of the past five years. Any time of in lieu granted is locally managed and not recorded, in accordance with MoJ's Flexible Working Policy.

SCOTLAND

■ **British Constitution**

Sir Henry Bellingham: [\[912066\]](#)

What steps he is taking to strengthen the Union.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[912072\]](#)

What steps he is taking to strengthen the Union.

David Mundell:

Strengthening and Sustaining the Union is a key priority for the UK Government. This is why we have asked Lord Dunlop to carry out a review to ensure that we are working in the most effective way possible to realise fully all the benefits of being a United Kingdom.

■ Pension Credit: Scotland

Hugh Gaffney: [\[912067\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on trends in the level of claims for pension credit in Scotland.

David Mundell:

I have regular discussions with my Rt honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on a range of issues.

Whilst the Pension Credit GB caseload stands at around 1.6 million, the number of Pension Credit claims in Scotland stands at around 150,000 - an almost 10% reduction in the number of claims since May 2017.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Noise

Andrew Rosindell: [\[278424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce aircraft noise over South East England.

Michael Ellis:

I refer my Honourable friend to the answer given to him on 16 July.

■ Cars: Alternative Fuels

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[278970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many alternative fuelled cars have been registered in each of the last three years.

Michael Ellis:

The table below shows the number of alternative fuelled vehicles, that were registered in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

YEAR	TOTAL
2016	90,669
2017	121,441
2018	148,526

■ Department for Transport: Ethnic Groups

Seema Malhotra: [\[279058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many BAME staff are employed at (a) grade 7, (b) grade 5 and (c) grade 3 in his Department.

Michael Ellis:

As at June 30th, the numbers of BAME staff at the requested grades are as follows:

GRADE	BAME STAFF
Grade 3 (SCS Payband 3)	0
Grade 5 (SCS Payband 1)	6
Grade 7	101

It is worth noting numbers are not complete as these figures represent only those staff who have chosen to record their diversity information and self-identified as BAME on our HR records system. It is not mandatory to complete this information.

This figure represents the numbers across the Department and its Executive Agencies.

■ Department for Transport: Working Hours

Jon Trickett:[\[278373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much time off in lieu has been taken by staff in his Department in each of the last five years.

Michael Ellis:

We do not keep a central record of time off in lieu (TOIL) taken through flexible working patterns; this is managed locally.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Databases

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[278969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many requests for vehicle owner information have been made by overseas enforcement agencies in each of the last five years by country.

Michael Ellis:

As part of the Cross Border Exchange Directive, EU Member States can request keeper or owner details of vehicles from other Member States, to follow up certain road traffic offences. CBE was implemented in the UK on 7 May 2017, the table below shows the number of requests for vehicle keeper information up to 27 June 2019.

	(FROM 7 MAY) 2017	2018	(TO 27 JUNE) 2019
Austria	15,988	30,530	8,786
Belgium	7	11	-
Bulgaria	1,222	2,693	1,235

	(FROM 7 MAY) 2017	2018	(TO 27 JUNE) 2019
Croatia	218	367	102
Czech Republic	86	2,115	1,474
Estonia	7	2	-
Finland	-	-	3
France	-	36	241,467
Germany	40,124	88,362	29,388
Hungary	6,169	9,861	3,636
Italy	13,586	58,832	21,422
Latvia	13	512	15,354
Lithuania	1,211	3,761	5,903
Luxembourg	1,286	3,149	1,270
Malta	-	2	43
Poland	1,697	3,816	1,310
Slovakia	199	408	195
Slovenia	86	196	117
Spain	1,199	51,851	16,863
The Netherlands	55	3,569	21,961

In addition, the Home Office can receive requests for vehicle information from overseas authorities, through either Mutual Legal Assistance requests or European Investigation Orders. Information on the volume of these requests is not stored within the Department for Transport.

■ Northern

Esther McVey:

[\[278985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons there are no direct Northern rail services between Liverpool and Newcastle.

Andrew Jones:

TransPennine Express provides an hourly service between these cities which will soon be operated by brand new 125mph-capable intercity bi-mode trains.

There is no requirement in the current Northern franchise agreement for Northern to run direct services from Liverpool to Newcastle.

■ Railway Stations

Alan Brown: [\[280296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many train stations there are in England; and how many of those stations have step-free access.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

There are 1988 stations in England. Information on the facilities available at railway stations is collected by the Rail Delivery Group, rather than the Department, and details of the accessibility features are published on the National Rail Enquiries website.

■ Railway Stations: Access

Alan Brown: [\[280293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many rail stations were upgraded to step-free access in control periods one to five in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) England; and what was the cumulative spend was for each of those nations in that timeframe.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Access for All has delivered step free routes at 202 existing stations, since its launch in 2006.

Access improvements are also delivered as part of other major projects, such as the 40 Crossrail stations which will be made accessible, and by the industry itself, which must meet current accessibility standards whenever it installs, replaces or renews station infrastructure.

Details of all works since control period 1 are held by the individual organisations and the information on the facilities available at stations is collected and held by the Rail Delivery Group.

Alan Brown: [\[280294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many railway stations will be upgraded to step free access in control period 6 in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) England; and what is the funding allocation for each region.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We have made an additional £300m available for our Access for All programme during CP6. 73 stations are due to benefit from this funding, with 6 in Scotland, 10 in Wales and 57 in England.

This is in addition to access improvements delivered as part of other major projects, and by the industry itself, which must meet current accessibility standards whenever it installs, replaces or renews station infrastructure.

■ Railway Stations: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[\[280295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many train stations there are in Scotland; and how many of those stations have step-free access.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

There are 357 stations in Scotland. Information on the facilities available at railway stations is collected by the Rail Delivery Group, rather than the Department, and details of the accessibility features are published on the National Rail Enquiries website.

■ Railway Stations: Wales

Alan Brown:

[\[280297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many train stations there are in Wales; and how many of those stations have step-free access.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

There are 222 stations in Wales. Information on the facilities available at railway stations is collected by the Rail Delivery Group, rather than the Department, and details of the accessibility features are published on the National Rail Enquiries website.

■ Railways

Faisal Rashid:

[\[278597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the rail industry is accountable to Government.

Andrew Jones:

The Department works closely with the rail industry to ensure it is held accountable, with regular meetings between industry and Ministers and officials. A number of robust reporting and risk management processes are in place to support this work. The Williams Rail Review will also consider the role of the Department as part of its thinking on wider reform.

■ Railways: Concessions

Ben Bradley:

[\[280380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people aged 16 to 18 years old who will benefit from the proposed introduction of a new discount railcard for that age group in (a) Mansfield constituency, (b) Nottinghamshire and (c) the East Midlands.

Andrew Jones:

All young people aged 16 – 17 are eligible to benefit from the card in these regions, and market research indicates that approximately 2/3 of young people may take advantage in the East Midlands region.

■ Southern: British Transport Police**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[279445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many British Transport Police officers worked on the Southern Rail network in each of the last eight years.

Andrew Jones:

The British Transport Police does not allocate officers exclusively to specific parts of the network. Train Operating Companies each contribute a share of the overall costs of policing the railway network through a Police Service Agreement (PSA) with BTP. The PSA does not specify or allocate officers to a particular PSA holder or area and it is the responsibility of the Chief Constable of BTP to determine the level of policing across the rail network as a whole.

TREASURY**■ Banks: Cybercrime****Ms Lisa Forbes:** [\[280460\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure banks are able to effectively tackle cybercrime.

John Glen:

The Government is determined to protect consumers and further improve the resilience of the finance sector.

The Financial Authorities (HM Treasury, the Bank of England, Prudential Regulation Authority, and the Financial Conduct Authority) work together to assess, test and improve the operational resilience, including cyber resilience, of the finance sector.

The finance sector also benefits from a dedicated team within the National Cyber Security Centre, who work closely with industry, the Financial Authorities, and the National Crime Agency to protect firms and provide support during incidents.

In July 2018, the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority published a joint Discussion Paper on an approach to improve the operational resilience, including cyber resilience, of firms and financial market infrastructures.

It has also been made easier for customers to report fraud or cybercrime to law enforcement. Action Fraud is the UK's reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, providing a central point of contact for information about fraud and financially motivated internet crime.

■ Business: Taxation**Ruth George:** [\[279435\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to undertake a review of the business taxation system.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has no plans at present to review business taxation.

All aspects of the tax system are kept under review and are subject to change through the annual Budget, in the context of the wider public finances, with any future changes to the tax system being announced through this process.

Children: Day Care**Steve McCabe:**[\[280124\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps in the forthcoming spending review to ensure that funding levels for childcare keep pace with the rising cost of living.

Elizabeth Truss:

The government recognizes how important an issue childcare is to families with young children and we're taking action to help people with the cost of living. That is why we will be spending almost £6 billion a year on childcare support in 2019/20 – a record amount. Spending decisions beyond 2019/20 will be considered in full at the Spending Review.

Financial Services**Chuka Umunna:**[\[279465\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Guidance on how to prepare for Brexit if there's no deal, published by the Department for Exiting the European Union, what parts of the plan for banking, insurance and other financial services in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal have been implemented.

John Glen:

The Government has done the necessary work to make sure that we continue to have a stable and functioning financial services regime at the point of leaving the EU in a no deal scenario.

The Government has delivered a programme of legislation under the EU Withdrawal Act in order to provide continuity for UK citizens and businesses and to ensure the UK regulatory regime can function effectively outside of the EU.

This legislation includes temporary permissions for EEA firms currently passporting into the EU, and temporary permissions to allow UK firms to continue using Central Counterparties (CCPs) and Central Securities Depositories (CSDs) in the EEA. It also includes a transitional power for regulators to phase in post-exit regulatory requirements for firms where they have changed as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

Following the six-month Article 50 extension, new EU financial services legislation will become applicable between now and 31 October 2019 and will therefore form part of UK law on exit day. We are laying further Statutory Instruments under the EU Withdrawal Act to ensure this new legislation is workable in the UK at exit.

However, it should be noted that the UK authorities are not able through unilateral action to fully address all the risks. For example, the risks to EEA customers of UK

firms currently providing services into the EEA using the financial services passport also require action from the EU or individual member states.

We therefore welcome the steps taken by the EU and some individual member states to mitigate some of the risks. This includes: the EU's temporary equivalence and recognition for UK CCPs and CSDs; ESMA's decision to approve Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that include provisions to allow cross-border delegation of portfolio management between the UK and the EEA; and EIOPA recommendations which call on relevant member state regulators to put in place measures which aim to minimise detriment to insurance policyholders.

As a result of all these actions, the Bank of England's Financial Policy Committee said in its Financial Stability Report (July 2019): 'Most risks to UK financial stability from disruption to cross-border financial services in a no-deal Brexit have been mitigated.' But they also note that 'in the absence of further action by EU authorities, some disruption to cross-border financial services is possible.'

■ **Police: Finance**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[280451\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether funding will be made available for policing in addition to that announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 2019 Spring Statement.

Elizabeth Truss:

We are keeping our families, communities and country safe by making sure the police have the resources they need to carry out their vital work. We protected police funding in real terms at the Spending Review 2015. Recognising that the police are responding to a shift in demand, in 2019/20 we have: increased the Government's core grant to police forces by £161m; and, allowed Police and Crime Commissioners to increase their council tax precept referendum principle to £24, which if used in full would raise £509m.

The upcoming Spending Review will allow the government to consider its priorities across all spending.

■ **Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services**

Jessica Morden:

[\[279394\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) longest and (b) average response time was to answer an HMRC helpline; and how many complaints about telephone response times to those helplines have been made in the last six months for which figures are available.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC measure their telephony performance through average speed to answer and the percentage of customers needing to wait over 10 minutes.

In 2018-19, for customers who needed to speak to an adviser after going through the automated telephone system, HMRC's average speed of answer was narrowly outside the five minute target at 5:14 mins. 19.7% of customers waited longer than ten minutes to be connected to an adviser, which is outside HMRC's 15% target.

HMRC do not record complaints data broken down to this level of detail so the information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Valuation Office Agency

Ruth George:

[\[279436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the Valuation Office Agency budgeted for appeals against revaluations of business rate liabilities in each financial year since 2010-11; and how much of that budget was spent in each of those years.

Jesse Norman:

The Valuation Office Agency does not hold data broken down in this way. The combined costs of delivering work on Business Rates and Council Tax, as published each year in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts, are set out below:

BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX	EXPENDITURE £M
2010-11	156.8
2011-12	160.5
2012-13	150.6
2013-14	152.3
2014-15	150.4
2015-16	169.3
2016-17	167.7
2017-18	157.6
2018-19	158.0

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DEFENCE

■ Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Nia Griffith: [\[276529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much money the Royal Fleet Auxiliary spent on vessel maintenance in each financial year since 2009-10.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 17 July 2019. The correct answer should have been:

Stuart Andrew:

The amounts spent in each financial year on vessel maintenance for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (rounded to the nearest million) are shown in the following table:

FINANCIAL YEAR	TOTAL SPEND (£ MILLION)
2015-16	116 74
2016-17	56 48
2017-18	96 95
2018-19	76

Data for financial years 2009-10 to 2014-15 is no longer held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HOME OFFICE

■ Slavery

Vernon Coaker: [\[R\] \[277641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he has taken in response to the April 2019 High Court judgment on the 45 day limit for support for victims of modern slavery; and if he will make a statement.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 24 July 2019. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Atkins:

This Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery and ensuring that victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives

We are always building our understanding of the complex needs of victims of modern slavery and striving to improve the support available. This case has highlighted the importance of tailoring support according to the individual needs of victims and, in response, we will be embedding a more needs-based approach in our services.

In October 2017, Government announced an ambitious package of reforms to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) — our system for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. We have already made significant progress in delivering this complex reform programme and we will continue to drive improvements to the services available to ensure they are meeting the recovery needs of victims.

The Government is committed to stamping out modern slavery and providing victims with the support they need to rebuild their lives.

We are always working to improve our understanding of the complex needs of victims of modern slavery and to improve the support available.

In October 2017, Government announced an ambitious package of reforms to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – our system for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. We have already made significant progress in delivering this complex reform programme. We will now make further improvements to this offer – including embedding a needs-based approach to support – to better tailor support services to the needs of victims. The specific details and timeline associated with this work is being developed.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Annual Report and Accounts 2018 – 2019

The Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Mr Nick Hurd):
[\[HCWS1804\]](#)

I am today, along with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the Member for Hereford and South Herefordshire (Mr Jesse Norman), publishing the 2018-19 annual report and accounts for the Independent Office for Police Conduct [HC 2501]. This will be laid before the House and published on www.gov.uk. The report will also be available in the Vote Office.

■ Justice and Home Affairs post-Council statement

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sajid Javid): [\[HCWS1805\]](#)

An informal meeting of EU Interior and Justice Ministers took place on 18/19 July in Helsinki, Finland. The Home Office Europe Director, Chris Jones, represented the UK for Interior Day. The Ministry of Justice Director, International and Rights, Paul Candler, represented the UK on Justice Day.

Interior Day began with a discussion on the Future of EU Internal Security, where the Presidency noted its intention to discuss further at the October JHA Council to inform the new Commission's work programme. In a broad ranging discussion, a number of issues were raised including: the new Commission President's commitment to promote cross-border cooperation; the importance of enhancing Europol; the use of EU funding programmes to support internal security activity; the need to modernise Prüm; the importance of SIS II; and tackling child exploitation. The UK intervened to support the broad thrust of the Presidency's paper, focusing on the importance on access to data and challenges from new technology, especially the need for early engagement with the private sector to protect law enforcement capabilities.

The Council then discussed the Future of EU Migration policy. Ministers raised a broad range of issues, with a focus on the revision of the EU's Common European Asylum System legislation, which remains unresolved. Other issues raised including the need to address lack of cooperation by third countries on readmission, a focus on EU-Africa co-operation to tackle illegal migration, disembarkation platforms in third countries, the need for better external checks at the EU's borders, and the problem of secondary movements. The UK did not intervene.

Over lunch, the Finnish Presidency presented to Ministers on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by law enforcement, after which followed a brief discussion on the benefits and risks from the use of AI. Discussion addressed the need to protect people from both private sector capabilities and state actors, and considered how EU privacy

concepts needed to be reconsidered in the law enforcement context. The Commission highlighted plans to prioritise consideration of the impact of AI, 5G and risks to digital infrastructure. The UK did not intervene.

After lunch, Ministers undertook a tabletop exercise focused on identifying and dealing with hybrid threats. Ministers were asked to consider and vote on responses to a fictional scenario. The post-scenario discussion considered the use of the EU's solidarity clause. The UK did not intervene.

Justice Day began with a discussion on the Strengthening of the Rule of Law. Justice Ministers agreed that significant domestic responsibility for rule of law fell to them and their Ministries. National courts implemented EU law and ensured mutual trust was possible, while judicial training and judicial co-operation mechanisms were vital. All Ministers agreed, therefore, that the Justice Council should have a role. The UK noted commitment to the Rules Based International Order, highlighting in particular the work of the Venice Commission, the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 16, and the benefits of direct judicial co-operation.

The Council then discussed criminal judicial cooperation, in particular Alternatives to Detention and the issues relating to prison overcrowding. Discussion centred around the aim of considering alternatives to prison. For most, the aim was not reduction of prison populations but, rather, improved rehabilitation. Member States were clear that national rules should not be harmonised, but regarded mutual trust in appropriate sanctions, and in prison conditions, as a precondition for mutual recognition.

Over lunch, Ministers discuss civil judicial cooperation and multilateralism, including the Hague Conference and other fora such as UNIDROIT and UNCITRAL.