



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 August 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:44 P.M., 16 August 2019). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>4</b>
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	2	■ Railways: Standards	4
■ Food Supply	2	WORK AND PENSIONS	5
■ Food: Imports	2	■ Pensions	5
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	3	■ State Retirement Pensions: Females	5
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Ethnic Groups	3	<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>7</b>
HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	4	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	7
■ Parliamentary Estate: Beverage Containers	4	■ Agriculture: Subsidies	7

#### 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

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Food Supply

Caroline Lucas: [\[281006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidance his Department has issued to consumers on the supply of food in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

George Eustice:

On 31 July, the Prime Minister announced a new £138 million public awareness campaign to prepare the public for every aspect of our leaving the EU without an agreement at the end of October.

Caroline Lucas: [\[281008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the worse-case effects of the UK leaving the EU without a deal on (a) the proportion of food trucks not being able to have smooth border transit, (b) waiting times at borders, (c) the length of time of disruption to food supplies, (d) potential food price rises and (e) the finances of vulnerable people.

George Eustice:

The government has been planning for a no deal scenario for the past three years and the cross government Border Delivery Group has been working on logistics issues and planning for a range of scenarios. The government has conducted exercises to test systems in preparation for leaving the EU without a deal and Operation Brock has been developed as a contingency plan, in the event that any problems arise at cross-Channel ports, to manage traffic flows.

Caroline Lucas: [\[281012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to undertake a public awareness campaign on the effect on food (a) supply and (b) prices of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

George Eustice:

On the 31st July, the Prime Minister announced a new £138 million public awareness campaign to prepare the public for every aspect of our leaving the EU without an agreement at the end of October.

#### ■ Food: Imports

Kerry McCarthy: [\[280215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU without a deal on 31 October 2019, on the supply of fresh produce.

George Eustice:

The UK's high degree of food security is built on access to a range of sources including strong domestic production and imports from other countries. This will continue to be the case whether we leave the EU with or without a deal.

Half of the food we eat is produced in the UK. The rest of our food is imported, with 30% coming from the EU and 20% from other countries. There will not be an overall shortage of food in the UK as a result of a no deal Brexit. However, there may be fluctuations in the availability and choice of certain seasonal products, such as fresh fruit. The UK has a high degree of self-sufficiency in some vegetables year-round including root vegetables, cabbage and potatoes, as well as certain fruits during the summer harvest season including strawberries and apples.

Over the last three years Government has been working to prioritise the smooth flow of trade, particularly at channel ports, to minimise any disruption if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. This includes cross Government work to ensure traders and hauliers in the UK and the EU are prepared for changes to exporting and importing requirements; ensuring our approach to imports achieves a smooth flow of goods at UK ports; working with stakeholders, major ports and airports to ensure that they are making their own preparations for leaving the EU; and developing traffic management plans to manage any potential delays at the ports, for example Operation Brock in Kent.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Ethnic Groups

Seema Malhotra:

[\[279050\]](#)

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

Christopher Pincher:

The percentage of United Kingdom-based ethnic minority staff employed at D6 (grade 7 equivalent) in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is 9 per cent. The percentage of United Kingdom-based ethnic minority staff employed in the FCO's senior management structure (SMS) is 7 per cent. Diversity statistics are published in the FCO's Annual Report and Accounts 2018-2019. They are given as percentages and are not broken down into separate SMS grades (SMS 1 (grade 5 equivalent), SMS 2 (grade 3 equivalent), SMS 3 and SMS 4) in order to protect individual staff anonymity.

The Civil Service-wide percentage for ethnic minority staff in SCS grades is 6.0 per cent (March 2019). The Civil Service-wide percentage for ethnic minority staff at grade 7 is 11.1 per cent.

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**

## ■ Parliamentary Estate: Beverage Containers

Caroline Lucas:

[280286]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, what recent assessment the Commission has made of the effect of the 25p surcharge on hot drinks served in disposable cups on the Parliamentary estate on (a) drinks sales and (b) disposable cup waste.

Tom Brake:

In the nine months to September 2018, before the 25p surcharge, catering (non-banqueting) sales for hot beverages was £655,640 incl VAT. In the nine months to date, after the surcharge, hot beverage (non-banqueting) sales were £727,203 incl VAT.

There has been a reduction from 58,000 paper cups per month being sold to 15,000 on average. It is not possible to count the number of such paper cups which enter Parliamentary waste containers, but visual observation of the contents of segregated compostable waste shows that many of the compostable cups are disposed of within the Estate.

**TRANSPORT**

## ■ Railways: Standards

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[280131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve the punctuality of trains.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

*[Holding answer 25 July 2019]:* Government takes train punctuality seriously and understands it is crucial to passengers and freight users. That is why Government agreed a Network Rail settlement for England and Wales of £47.9bn for Control Period 6 specifically aimed at maintaining and renewing the railway to improve reliability and punctuality for all rail users. We recognise performance on the railway has been unsatisfactory, and passengers have not always received the level of service they expected. While performance has improved recently, the new Transport Secretary understands passengers need the certainty of reliable journeys, and is determined to work with industry to improve performance. We continue to monitor the performance of our franchised operators closely to press for improvements for passengers.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Pensions

Kevin Brennan:

[280183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she plans to take to limit a person's pension age rise when age eligibility for the state pension is increased.

Guy Opperman:

The Government published its review of State Pension age in July 2017. The report can be viewed here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/630065/state-pension-age-review-final-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630065/state-pension-age-review-final-report.pdf).

The next Government review of State Pension age will be completed within six years of that report.

The Pensions Act 2014 requires the Government to regularly review State Pension age and report to Parliament, to help to ensure the rules about State Pension age are appropriate having regard to life expectancy and the costs of increasing longevity are shared fairly between the generations, and provide greater clarity around the plans for changing State Pension age in the future.

The changes to State Pension age became law following consultation and extensive debates in Parliament. During the passage of the Pensions Act 2011, Parliament introduced limits to person's State Pension age rise, worth £1.1 billion, which reduced the proposed increase in State Pension age for over 450,000 men and women, meaning that no woman will see her pension age change by more than 18 months, relative to the original 1995 Act timetable.

### ■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[279380]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to compensate women born in the 1950s who were adversely affected by changes to the state pension age.

Guy Opperman:

Successive Governments have made necessary decisions to equalise and increase the State Pension age. State Pension age reform has focused on maintaining the right balance between sustainability of State Pension, equality and fairness between generations in the face of demographic change.

Even after equalising women's State Pension age with men's, women will spend on average around 2 years more in receipt of their state pension because of their longer life expectancy. If we had not equalised State Pension age, women would be expected to spend on average over 40 per cent of their adult lives in retirement.

During the passage of the 2011 Act, the Government listened to the concerns of those affected and this is why we introduced a concession worth over £1 billion in

order to limit the impact on those women who would be most affected by the changes. This concession reduced the proposed increase in State Pension age for over 450,000 men and women, and means that no woman will see her pension age change by more than 18 months, relative to the 1995 Act timetable.

For people who simply can't work, our welfare system will continue to provide a strong safety net, as it does for people of all ages now. Any women experiencing hardship, including problems such as unemployment, disability, and coping with caring responsibilities, can already claim support from the welfare system. The Government is committed to supporting the vulnerable and spends over £50 billion a year on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions.

The new State Pension is more generous for many women. Over three million women stand to gain an average of £550 extra per year by 2030 as a result of recent State Pension reforms.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Dr David Drew:

[\[278334\]](#)

[Suggested redraft] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of farms at risk of closing down as a result of a new systems of agricultural payments as outlined in the Government's policy paper of 12 September 2018 on health and harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a green Brexit, what the size of those farms are; and the type of farming undertaken by those farms.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 1 August 2019. The correct answer should have been:**

George Eustice:

In September 2018, alongside the Agriculture Bill and policy statement, the Government published an 'Analysis of the impacts of removing Direct Payments'. This provided an overview of the potential impacts to different farm types and sizes of moving away from direct payments and introducing a new system of public money for public goods. It also showed the potential across all sectors for farmers to become more efficient—producing more for less—as a response to any reductions in direct payments.

Direct payments are untargeted, poor value for money, undermine efficiency and productivity improvements, and limit opportunities for new entrants. They have imposed unnecessary bureaucracy on farmers and can inflate rent prices. Some of our most successful and vibrant food-producing sectors of agriculture have never been subsidised. For example the poultry industry, the pig industry and the horticulture industry.

**Direct payments are arbitrary payments based on land area that tend to favour larger land owners rather than smaller family farming businesses.** In England we will phase out direct payments during an agricultural transition, giving time for farmers to adjust. Phasing out direct payments will free up money so we can reward farmers for delivering public goods, including environmental outcomes **and animal welfare**. We recognise that some certain sectors are more dependent than others on direct payments but provided that these farmers are delivering public goods, they will be well placed to benefit from the new system.