

**Daily Report****Monday, 7 October 2019**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 October 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:26 P.M., 07 October 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ **Exploitation: Children and Young People**

Lyn Brown:

[\[290916\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Crown Prosecution Service's compliance with legislation and guidance relating to the avoidance of unnecessary prosecution of children and young people who have been groomed, exploited or trafficked as part of county lines criminal activity.

Michael Ellis:

The exploitation, grooming, and trafficking of children and young people is abhorrent. The CPS takes great care to ensure the right people are prosecuted for the right offences in county lines cases, by training prosecutors to have an increased awareness of gang-associated exploitation and to scrutinise the evidence. This builds on clear CPS guidance which recognises the principle of non-prosecution of victims of trafficking or slavery.

Early identification by investigators is essential, in order to avoid the criminalisation of victims. On 1 October 2019, the Home Secretary announced a surge of activity to crack down on county lines drugs gangs. The package of measures, underpinned by £20 million of Home Office investment, will intensify law enforcement efforts to disrupt the county lines model, including the provision of specialist support to victims and families in order to help children and young people exit their involvement in county lines.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Boilers: Biofuels**

Alan Brown:

[\[292386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2019 to Question 208368 on Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme: Scotland, how many outstanding decision notices there are for applications under the renewable heat incentive scheme for the installation of a biomass boiler for (a) non-domestic properties and (b) domestic applications.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

At the end of September 2019 (the latest available data) in Scotland, there were 60 non-domestic biomass boiler applications outstanding (i.e. not yet accredited or rejected from the scheme); and 17 domestic biomass boiler applications outstanding.

■ Brexit

Tom Brake:

[\[292788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what sectors his Department plans to prioritise for support in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department is maintaining efforts to ensure businesses across the UK are ready to leave the EU on 31 October. We continue to robustly assess the potential impact of no-deal and are engaging widely with businesses across all sectors and meeting regularly with business representative organisations and trade associations. HMRC has also put into place funding for training that helps businesses to complete customs declarations and processes and has launched a trader helpline to answer border related questions

The Business Readiness Fund makes up to £15M available to support Business Representative Organisations as they help to prepare businesses for leaving the EU on 31 October. As of 1 October, BEIS has approved 69 bids from business representative organisations. Further applications are still in the process of being reviewed. Applications have spanned a wide range of sectors and are from across the UK. We continue to encourage bids until applications close on 7 October.

In addition, we have secured £1.3 million central funding which we are directing towards targeted sector-specific engagement across the UK through sector teams to complement the Business Readiness Fund and Public Information Campaign.

■ Climate Change: Training

Chi Onwurah:

[\[292907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure that the green technology and decarbonisation work forces have the skills necessary to respond to the climate emergency.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We are establishing a technical education system that rivals the best in the world and are investing an additional £406 million in maths, digital and technical education to help address the shortage of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills. These measures will help provide good jobs and greater earning power for all, and will help provide businesses with the skilled people they need to thrive in our growing low carbon economy.

The Department for Education has recently announced the creation of the independent Skills and Productivity Board (SPB) which will provide expert analysis, and evidence of which skills and training add the most value to the economy, and give the best jobs and earnings for learners. Government will use the Board's evidence to inform policy decisions which will help the system to deliver more of the most valuable skills.

■ Construction: Carbon Emissions

Mr Mark Prisk:

[\[292135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to reduce carbon emissions in the construction sector.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government, working in partnership with industry, launched the Construction Sector Deal in July 2018, in order to deliver a substantial improvement in the productivity growth of the sector. At the heart of the deal is a joint public and private sector investment of £420m in the Transforming Construction Programme, which will accelerate the adoption of digital and manufacturing technologies to improve building performance and reduce waste, with the aim of reducing lifetime carbon emissions by 50%. In particular, £32m has been invested in the Advanced Building Centre which is developing energy generation and storage technologies for use in buildings.

Through the Green Construction Board, we are working with industry to achieve the Buildings Mission goal of halving the energy consumption of new buildings by 2030, and halve the cost of retrofit over the same period. The Board is also working with Government to develop a road map to zero avoidable waste in the sector. The road map will be delivered by the end of next year. By reducing waste and encouraging the use of sustainable materials we can further reduce Green House Gas emissions.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Secondment

Darren Jones:

[\[291155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people working in her Department are on secondment from (a) the petroleum industry (b) EDF, (c) BP, and (d) Shell.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The number of people on secondment working in the Department from:

- a) The petroleum industry is one;
- b) EDF is none;
- c) BP is none; and
- d) Shell is one.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Travel

Ruth Jones:

[\[292404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2017.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department publishes data on ministerial travel on a quarterly basis in arrears on GOV.UK.

Ruth Jones:

[\[292414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2018.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department publishes data on ministerial travel on a quarterly basis in arrears on GOV.UK.

■ Electricity Generation

Alan Brown:

[\[292388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeframe is for the conclusion of the review of evidence on levelised costs of electricity generation; and if she will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We are currently undertaking a review of our evidence on levelised costs of electricity generation, which will be published in due course. BEIS's most recent published assessment of electricity generation costs can be found in the generation costs report (2016).^[1]

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beis-electricity-generation-costs-november-2016>

■ Energy

Alan Brown:

[\[292952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timetable is for the publication of the White Paper on energy policy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State will provide the timetable for the publication of the Energy White Paper in due course.

■ Energy: Meters

Emma Reynolds:

[\[293548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate she has made of the number of smart meters that have been replaced as a result of customers switching energy suppliers in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Smart meters continue to record energy consumption accurately when a consumer switches energy supplier, even when the new energy supplier is temporarily unable to operate the meter in smart mode. Smart meters are rarely replaced when a consumer switches energy supplier. Of the total number of smart meters installed in Great

Britain as of the end of 2018, less than 0.4% were replaced in the preceding 12 months following a consumer switch.

Smart meters will give households the information to allow them to be more active consumers and more easily act upon poor service or expensive tariffs, and in time make switching suppliers easier and faster.

■ **Energy: Northern Ireland**

Jo Stevens:

[\[292933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Single Energy Area for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will continue in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement on 31 October 2019.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

It is the UK Government's position that by far the best outcome for electricity in Northern Ireland is to maintain the Single Electricity Market (SEM). The UK is committed to seeking to maintain the SEM in any scenario and will therefore take all possible measures to do so. Both the Ireland and Northern Ireland energy regulators have stated that they expect the SEM to continue if the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement. We will continue to work with the Irish Government to ensure that technical, operational and legal arrangements are in place for the SEM to continue in this scenario.

■ **Fireworks: Sales**

Ian Austin:

[\[291314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate her Department has made of the level of support for a ban on the public sale of fireworks.

Kelly Tolhurst:

There are already strong laws in place to control firework availability and use to reduce the risks to people and disturbance to animals, including age related restrictions, a curfew and a noise limit. There are also enforcement mechanisms in place to tackle situations when fireworks are sold illegally or misused.

There are no plans to ban the sale of fireworks and no estimate has been made of the public support for such a ban.

■ **Flexible Working and Holiday Leave: Domestic Abuse**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[292139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to require employers to provide domestic abuse survivors with (a) flexible working arrangements and (b) a period of paid leave.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 3 October 2019]: Domestic abuse is a devastating crime which shatters the lives of victims and their families, and this Government remains committed to transforming the response to this abuse. That is why we have introduced the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill, which had its Second Reading on 2 October and will be carried over to the next Parliamentary session.

Employers should take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing of their employees.

We know that 97% of employers offer some form of flexible working. Many employers also offer compassionate leave or special leave to employees to enable them to take time to deal with a wide range of circumstances. This type of leave is agreed between the employer and the employee, either as a contractual entitlement or on a discretionary basis.

■ **Fuel Poverty: Merseyside****Ms Angela Eagle:****[292836]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in (a) Wallasey constituency, (b) Wirral and (c) Merseyside are living in fuel poverty.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The number of households living in fuel poverty in 2017 in Wallasey constituency, Wirral and Merseyside can be found in the table below.

Estimated number of households living in Fuel poverty, 2017

	WALLASEY CONSTITUENCY	WIRRAL (LOCAL AUTHORITY)	MERSEYSIDE[1]
Estimated number of households in fuel poverty	6,300	19,900	92,700
Proportion of households in fuel poverty (%)	15.3	13.5	14.7

Household figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

The latest sub-regional statistics can be found here :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2019>, Table 2, Table 4 and Table 5

[1] Figures for Merseyside County has been derived from the 5 Metropolitan districts – Liverpool, Knowsley, St. Helens, Sefton and Wirral.

■ Fuels

Chris Ruane:

[\[292845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291262, if he will place in the Library a copy of the provisions of the referenced fuel supply contingency programme which would be deployed in the event of disruption to fuel supplies in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government's long-standing fuel supply contingency programme is not publicly available to protect the sensitive operational information it contains, and to prevent the efficacy of the plans from being compromised. The specific plans for Brexit also contain sensitive commercial information.

As set out in my previous answer, the Government believes that in most circumstances the fuel industry is well positioned to respond to disruptions to the supply chain. However, if required, our contingency programme includes measures to help the industry coordinate their response and increase its effectiveness as well as a reserve fleet of road tankers to increase the logistics capacity available for fuel supplies in the event of a disruption. The appropriate elements of this programme required will be decided in the context of any specific incident.

■ Fusion Reactors

Layla Moran:

[\[292339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to the public purse of the Government's proposal to develop and build a commercially viable fusion power plant by 2040.

Chris Skidmore:

As announced over the weekend, the government has just approved a ground-breaking commitment to fund the first five-year phase of the STEP programme costing £220m. This phase will complete detailed design and development work will allow the UK to maintain its world-leading status in fusion and enable cost estimates for the full programme to be made in detail. The Government's expectation is that later phases will involve significant private sector involvement and investment which will maximise the value for money for the public purse.

■ Hinkley Point C Power Station

Alan Brown:

[\[292948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the revised commissioning date is for Hinkley Point C nuclear power station; and if she will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

EDF is the lead investor in Hinkley Point C and, together with its investment partners, is responsible for the project's schedule. On 25 September 2019, EDF confirmed the project's intent to generate power from Unit 1 at the end of 2025, which has not changed from the date previously stated on 3 July 2017.

■ Indian Queens Power Station

Alan Brown: [\[290728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Indian Queens Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Aberthaw GT Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Cowes Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Arnish Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Barra Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Bowmore Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Five Oaks Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [\[290737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Keadby GT Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [290738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date Kirkwall Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [290739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Lerwick Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [290740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Stornoway Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [290741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Thatcham Power Station is.

Alan Brown: [290743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the (a) generation capacity and (b) estimated decommissioning date for Taylor's Lane GT Power Station is.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Generation capacity information for GB can be located on the TEC Register on the National Grid ESO website at

<https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/149106/download>

Decommissioning decisions are a commercial matter for the company concerned.

Following consultation in November 2016 the Government confirmed its commitment to put an end to unabated coal power generation in GB from 2025.

■ Industry: Coal

Paul Farrelly: [292851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to support research into cost-effective alternatives to coal for heavy industry.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department understands the need for industry to decarbonise as the UK moves towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. To support this priority, the Department is currently running, or intending to run, the following R&D programmes that focus on industrial decarbonisation, which may consider bids for cost-effective alternatives to coal:

- The Industrial Fuel Switching Competition is a £20m competition, funded by the BEIS £505m Energy Innovation Portfolio (2016-2021), which aims to identify and test the processes and technologies required for industries in the UK to switch to low carbon fuels;
- The Industrial Energy Transformation Fund was announced at Budget 2018 as a new fund worth up to £315 million to support businesses with high energy use to transition to a low carbon future and to cut their bills through increased energy efficiency;
- The Clean Steel Fund, is a £250m programme, currently under consultation, will support the UK steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production through new technologies and processes;
- The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund has two relevant challenges, including the industrial decarbonisation challenge which is focused on heavy industry, and the Transforming Foundation Industries challenge, which is focused on energy and resource efficiency.

■ Iron and Steel: Competition

Julian Sturdy:

[290987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to help maintain a competitive UK steel industry.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is firmly committed to supporting a productive and vibrant UK steel sector. We are working with the sector, the unions and devolved administrations to support the UK steel sector to develop a long-term sustainable future for the UK steel industry. My Department commissioned independent research to identify high value opportunities for UK steel, worth up to £3.8 billion a year by 2030.

In the 2018 Budget, the Government announced an Industrial Energy Transformation Fund with investment of £315 million to help businesses with high energy use to cut their bills and transition UK industry to a low carbon future.

Since 2013, the Government has provided more than £312m in compensation to the steel sector to make energy costs more competitive, including over £53 million during 2018. We are working hard to make sure that UK producers of steel have the best possible chance of competing for and winning contracts across all Government procurement. Since 2016, all Government departments and arms-length bodies are required to consider socio-economic and environmental factors when procuring steel.

The recent announcement of two important new funding programmes will help the steel industry in its efforts to remain competitive while reducing emissions and supporting the decarbonisation of the UK economy to achieve our ambitious 2050 net-zero targets: the £250m Clean Steel Fund and the planned £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund.

■ Kilroot Power Station

Alan Brown:

[292947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September to Question 290725 on Kilroot Power Station, when she plans to undertake a strategic assessment of the asset life of individual power stations to assess future power generation requirements and strategy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Generation capacity information for Northern Ireland can be found in the annual All-Island Generation Capacity Statement produced by the Transmission System Operators for Ireland and Northern Ireland, can be found at

http://www.eirgridgroup.com/site-files/library/EirGrid/Generation_Capacity_Statement_2018.pdf

Energy policy in Northern Ireland is largely a transferred (devolved) matter and therefore it would be for the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy to make strategic assessments of this nature.

■ Manufacturing Industries

Chris Ruane:

[292843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on just-in-time manufacturers of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department is maintaining efforts to ensure businesses across the UK are ready to leave the EU on 31 October. We continue to robustly assess the potential impact of no-deal and are engaging widely with businesses across all sectors and meeting regularly with business representative organisations and trade associations. In addition, we have also secured £1.3 million central funding which we are directing towards targeted sector-specific engagement across the UK through sector teams to complement the Business Readiness Fund and Public Information Campaign.

We have published an SME Brexit guidance leaflet and launched a series of Get Ready Roadshows. These specifically target businesses with information and advice and ensure intermediaries, such as banks and accountants, have the information needed to support businesses. We also recently unveiled a £10 million Business Readiness Fund for business organisations and trade associations to support businesses across the UK in understanding the steps they should take to prepare for 31 October.

■ Manufacturing Industries: North East

Chi Onwurah:

[292233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the oral contribution of 25 September 2019 from the Chancellor of the Duchy of

Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Official Report Column 739, how much money is available through business representative organisations to help North East manufacturers prepare for the UK leaving the EU; and which organisations are involved in this process.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Business Readiness Fund makes up to £15M available to support Business Representative Organisations as they help to prepare businesses for leaving the EU on 31 October. As of 1 October, BEIS has approved 69 bids from business representative organisations. Further applications are still in the process of being reviewed. Applications have spanned a wide range of sectors (including manufacturing) and are from across the UK, including the North East of England. We continue to encourage bids until applications close on 7 October.

■ **Post Office: Annual Reports**

Gill Furniss:

[\[292972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Post Office annual report 2018-19 will be published.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Post Office Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19 will be published in due course, after they are laid before Parliament, and in line with the requirement set out in the relevant Postal Services Act (2000).

■ **Retail Trade**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[292087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to increase consumer confidence in high street retail.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 3 October 2019]: Government wants high street retail to thrive. We are committed to supporting the sector whilst it responds to changing consumer expectations and recognise that 82% of sales by value are still in physical stores.

The industry led Retail Sector Council has brought Government and industry together. Its aim is to accelerate positive change, increase the productivity of the sector, and ensure the sector remains robust and sustainable to continue providing a valuable service to consumers and the community.

Government is also taking steps to help high streets and communities adapt. On 26th August, my rt. hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced the expansion of the Future High Streets Fund from £675m to £1bn which will enable more local areas in England to invest in town centre infrastructure, increase access to high streets and support redevelopment and densification around high streets.

We have also launched a new forward-thinking High Streets Task Force supporting local leaders to revitalise high streets and town centres. The High Streets Task Force will be comprised of experts who will provide tailored guidance and advice to local authorities and other local partners seeking to breathe new life into their local high streets and town centres.

Since 2010, Government has helped create over 360 town teams, and given over £18million to towns - funding successful initiatives such as "Love Your Local Market", the "Great British High Street" and also supporting Small Business Saturday UK, where an estimated £812 million was spent with small businesses across the UK for Small Business Saturday in 2018, up from £748 million in 2017.

■ Service Industries: Unfair Practices

Sir David Crausby:

[\[292105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when her Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to tackle unfair practices in the hospitality sector in relation to (a) tips, (b) gratuities, (c) cover charges and (d) service charges.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 3 October 2019]: Through the Good Work Plan, the Government is taking forward the largest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation. In order to improve fairness for workers, we have committed to introduce legislation to ensure that tips left to workers will go to them in full.

We expect over a million workers to benefit from new rules on tips, many of whom are in low-paid jobs. Consumers will have reassurance that the money they leave in good faith is going to the staff, as they intended.

We have been working closely with stakeholders and across Government to prepare this legislation and will lay measures in Parliament as soon as possible.

■ Sizewell C Power Station

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[290553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the effect on consumer energy bills will be in each year of operation of a regulated asset base agreement for the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station (a) prior to electricity production and (b) after electricity production has started.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are consulting to 14 October on whether a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model could be applied for future nuclear projects as an alternative funding model to Contract for Differences (CfDs).

Our intention is that consumer affordability would be considered and assessed for any project prior to granting a nuclear RAB licence. We will reflect on responses to the consultation before deciding next steps for a nuclear RAB and its design.

■ Small Businesses

Sir David Evennett:

[\[290972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that small businesses are prepared for the UK leaving the EU.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department is maintaining efforts to ensure businesses are ready to leave the EU on 31 October. We engage widely with businesses of all sizes, and as part of the refreshed communications campaign and engagement strategy which the Government has launched, BEIS is pursuing a range of actions to promote awareness and understanding of what businesses, including SMEs, need to do to get ready.

These include the publication of an SME Brexit guidance leaflet and the launch of our Get Ready Roadshows. These specifically target SMEs with information and advice but also ensure intermediaries, such as banks and accountants, have the information needed to support businesses.

Our plans also include advertising aimed at specific sectors using social and digital channels, as well as advertising in publications such as Auto Express setting out the steps businesses should take to get ready for Brexit.

We recently unveiled a £10 million Business Readiness Fund for business organisations and trade associations to support businesses, including SMEs, prepare for EU exit. These funds will support businesses across the UK in understanding the steps they should take to be ready for 31 October.

Through the British Business Bank (BBB) we are putting in place measures to support SMEs through cashflow challenges. Following a Business Finance Roundtable on 5 September, a new Business Finance Council has been established to support SMEs prepare for EU exit and help them secure working capital should they face difficulties in an economic downturn.

■ Stornoway Wind Farm: Contracts

Alan Brown:

[\[292387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason Stornoway Wind Farm was unsuccessful in the third Contracts for Difference round.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The winners of the third Contracts for Difference (CfD) Allocation Round were determined by a competitive auction. The auction is run independently by the Delivery Body, National Grid ESO to bring forward the most cost-effective projects in each delivery year. The auction results are then independently audited by Deloitte to ensure all calculations have complied with the relevant sections of the CfD Allocation

Framework. BEIS has no visibility of the bid prices of projects and so cannot comment on the reasons for unsuccessful projects.

Alan Brown:

[292398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the effect of Stornoway wind farm being unsuccessful in the third Contracts for Difference auction on the proposed interconnector to the Western Isles; and if she will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Decisions to approve network infrastructure are a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator, in response to proposals brought forward by network companies. It is therefore for Ofgem to assess the case for a transmission link to the Western Isles. Ofgem consulted between 19th March 2019 and 31st May 2019 on its 'minded-to' decision on a Needs Case for the proposed link, which had been prepared by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission. On 12th September 2019, Ofgem published an update letter on its consideration, which can be found at <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/update-letter-proposed-shetland-and-western-isles-electricity-transmission-projects>. In this letter, Ofgem states that it expects to publish a final decision on the Needs Case in late Autumn 2019.

CABINET OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Caroline Nokes:

[292205]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how events are assessed for level of risk for the purposes of inclusion on the National Risk Register.

Oliver Dowden:

The National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies (NRR) is the public-facing version of the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA), a classified assessment of the key risks that could potentially damage the safety or security of the UK or our interests, both domestically and overseas, in the next two years.

Both the malicious and non-malicious risks included in the NSRA are based on reasonable worst case scenarios informed by the expertise of government departments, academia, private sector and the wider scientific community. The risks are assessed on a) how likely it is that the risk will occur in the next two years and b) the breadth and scale of expected impacts across a number of dimensions were the scenario to occur. Such scenarios are not designed to predict what might happen in the future, but should illustrate the types of capabilities that need to be developed to prepare for, respond to and recover from, civil emergencies.

If a risk satisfies the definition of a 'civil emergency' as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and exceeds pre-defined thresholds for likelihood and

impact, then it will be included in the NSRA. Where sensitivities permit, the NRR will then communicate this risk information to the wider public via its publication on gov.uk.

■ Brexit

Mary Creagh: [\[290974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to ensure that the Get Ready for Brexit campaign complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); and whether a data protection impact assessment has been produced in accordance with Article 35 and 36 of the GDPR.

Michael Gove:

We take the protection and privacy of personal data very seriously. The Government Communication Service adopts the highest professional standards, including complying with data protection legislation. We have GDPR clauses in our contract with our media buying agency to help ensure compliance.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment is only required when the processing of personal data is likely to result in a high risk to individuals. For the Get Ready for Brexit campaign, we did not use personal data to target advertising, and only bought media space using contextual placements (for example, buying media space in the travel or business sections of papers or websites).

We are regularly engaging with the ICO to ensure that our campaign activity continues to meet best practice and is fully compliant with the data protection standards.

Luciana Berger: [\[293535\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the estimated cost incurred will be in the event that the Government implements Operation Black Swan.

Luciana Berger: [\[293536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what conditions his Department has set which would trigger the implementation of Operation Black Swan.

Kevin Foster:

The Cabinet Office is not aware of the existence of an Operation Black Swan.

■ Brexit: Publicity

Justin Madders: [\[293613\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291438, for what reasons the postcodes where adverts for the Get Ready for Brexit campaign have been placed will not be published.

Justin Madders:

[\[293614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291438, what criteria was used to determine the location of where the Get Ready for Brexit campaign adverts would be placed.

Justin Madders:

[\[293615\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291438, whether Ministers of his Department were involved in the selection of the locations for the Get Ready for Brexit campaign adverts.

Kevin Foster:

All advertising locations for the “Get Ready for Brexit” campaign were selected to fit two criteria:

1. to reach as many UK citizens and businesses as possible;
2. to ensure key messages are delivered to groups most likely to need to take action before the UK leaves the EU;

Messages and audiences were identified and independent advertising agency partners recommended the most appropriate and effective channels and locations.

We do not publish the individual postcodes where adverts are placed for any government campaign.

■ Cabinet Committees

Wes Streeting:

[\[293662\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many meetings each Cabinet committee has held since the Prime Minister took office.

Kevin Foster:

Cabinet committees meet on a regular basis to discuss government business. Since the Prime Minister took office this has continued.

■ Cabinet Office: Data Protection

Mary Creagh:

[\[293504\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291339 on Cabinet Office: Data Protection, (a) who the decision-maker was and (b) when the decision was made to create a separate account to hold centralised data collected from GOV.UK services; and was that decision reviewed by the Information Commissioners Office.

Simon Hart:

The work to create a centralised anonymised analytics account is part of the Government Digital Service's wider strategy for GOV.UK. It has been GDS' intention

to move towards this model for a while. This is standard practice for industry, and is how a modern government should operate.

The GDS takes the privacy of citizens' data extremely seriously. In developing this project, GDS have taken into account both the data protection regime and other guidance like the Government's Data Ethics Framework. Holding the anonymised cross-domain data in a separate account is just one of a range of technical, privacy and information assurance measures put in place before the start of the project.

Mary Creagh:

[\[293505\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291339 on Cabinet Office: Data Protection, how many (a) Ministers, (b) civil servants and (c) special advisers have access to that data.

Simon Hart:

No ministers or special advisers have access to the Google Analytics account containing the data referred to in the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291339. To date, 24 security cleared staff working on the project have access to the data. Access is granted on a case-by-case basis as required by business need to further ensure that only appropriate people have access to the data.

■ Cabinet Office: Jainism

Gareth Thomas:

[\[292809\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will invite representatives of the Jain community to national events organised by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

Britain's Jain community makes a positive contribution to life in this country. This Government values its contribution immensely.

The Cabinet Office is always keen to work with the Jain community on matters that are important to them, and we will continue to do so.

■ Democracy: Subversion

Nic Dakin:

[\[291490\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Government form Security check / counter terrorist check questionnaire: NSV001, what definitions the Government uses for (a) overthrowing and (b) undermining parliamentary democracy; and what criteria the Government uses to determine those actions.

Oliver Dowden:

For National Security Vetting purposes, Government policy does not define the terms 'overthrowing' or 'undermining' in any manner more explicit than the terms already indicate. The question asked of vetting candidates refers to 'political, industrial or

violent means' and this offers context for prospective candidates to understand what types of activities are being referred to.

There are too many hypothetical examples for a comprehensive list to be feasible. Each candidate is assessed on a case by case basis, giving due regard to the guidance offered by the classified Vetting Decision Framework. Where candidates disclose a potentially adverse association of any kind, assessment of their suitability to hold a security clearance will take into account:

1. the nature and closeness of the association in question;
2. the self-stated or privately stated aims of individuals or organisations that wish to replace the United Kingdom's current parliamentary political system; and
3. the assessments of relevant agencies involved in investigating or monitoring such individuals or organisations.

An example of 'undermining parliamentary democracy' would be if the vetting candidate disclosed that a family member had historic links to violent extremist groups.

■ **Department for Exiting the European Union: Brexit**

Tom Brake:

[\[292787\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Operation Yellowhammer, what his Department's base case planning assumptions were before that document was published.

Kevin Foster:

Yellowhammer has always considered the reasonable worst case scenario and never a 'base' or 'central' scenario. This was confirmed in the NAO report, published in March 2019, which said that in Operation Yellowhammer "Departments are working on the basis of a reasonable worst case scenario." Some iterations of the Reasonable worst case scenario planning assumptions have used the words 'base scenario' as a subtitle for the contextual assumptions, outlining the background to a no-deal brexit.

Yellowhammer reasonable worst case planning assumptions are kept under review and updated planning assumptions for exiting the European Union without a deal will be published in due course.

■ **Domestic Abuse: Older People**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[293447\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people over the age of 60 experiencing domestic abuse.

Kevin Foster:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to respond.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ293447.pdf]

■ **Dominic Cummings****Stephen Doughty:**[\[293593\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Mr Dominic Cummings is included on the internal government distribution copy list for (a) Cabinet minutes, (b) Cabinet papers, (c) Cabinet Sub-Committee minutes, (d) Cabinet Sub-Committee papers, (e) National Security Council papers, (f) National Security Council minutes, (g) diplomatic telegrams and (h) the Government Communications grid.

Kevin Foster:

It is the practice of successive administrations not to comment on which officials have access to confidential information.

■ **Electronic Government: Proof of Identity****Eddie Hughes:**[\[292335\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the withdrawal from the Verify scheme of service providers on people in (a) Walsall North constituency that have enrolled with that service and are required to re-enrol with another service provider.

Simon Hart:

Under the current GOV.UK Verify contracts, no users will have to re-enroll with a different identity provider to create a new GOV.UK Verify account.

■ **Former Ministers: Grants****Deidre Brock:**[\[292932\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many grants to persons ceasing to hold Ministerial and other offices under section 4 of the Ministerial and other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991 have been paid out in each year since 2010; and what was the total amount paid out in each year.

Kevin Foster:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer provided to PQ253622 on 16 May 2019.

■ **Government Chief Digital Information Officer: Government Chief Data Officer**

Jo Platt: [\[293724\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291432, if he will list the job responsibilities of the Chief Data Officer role and how they will work with the Government Chief Digital Information Officer.

Simon Hart:

The role of Chief Data Officer will be outlined in due course.

■ **Government Departments: Living Wage**

Matthew Pennycook: [\[R\] \[293677\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to ensure that the London Living Wage is paid by all Government Departments and their contractors.

Simon Hart:

The Government policy is that all workers in the UK are paid the statutory National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage. This is based on the advice of the Low Pay Commission. In April 2019, the National Living Wage increased to £8.21 per hour, handing a full-time worker a further £690 annual pay rise. By 2024 the National Living Wage will rise to £10.50 per hour, reaching 66% of median UK earnings. The scope will be expanded to everyone aged 21 and over and is expected to benefit over 4 million low paid workers.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Ian Lavery: [\[291428\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the Government has not responded to the letter of the hon. Member for Kingston Upon Hull North dated the 1 August 2019 on compensation for victims of the contaminated blood scandal.

Oliver Dowden:

As Minister for the Cabinet Office, I have Ministerial responsibility for the Infected Blood Inquiry. I replied to the letter from the hon. Member for Kingston Upon Hull on 30 September, and have apologised to her for the time taken to reply to her letter to the Prime Minister of 1 August.

■ **Prorogation**

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[291405\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the length of prorogation required in order for the Government to prepare for a Queen's speech.

Kevin Foster:

The Prime Minister intends to request that the current session of Parliament be prorogued from the evening of Tuesday 8 October, with a Queen's Speech on Monday 14 October.

These timings would mean Parliament is prorogued for the shortest time possible to enable all the necessary logistical preparations for a State Opening to be undertaken, including those done by the House Authorities.

■ **Sleeping Rough: Death****Chris Ruane:**[\[292841\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of rough sleepers who have died in each of the last seven years who previously served in the armed forces.

Kevin Foster:

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the Authority to respond.

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ292841 (1).pdf]

DEFENCE■ **Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[292892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a committee of inquiry into the causes and effects of the Afghanistan operation between 2003 and 2014.

Mark Lancaster:

The Department currently has no plans to conduct an inquiry into the causes and effects of the Afghanistan operation. Following the conclusion of Operation Herrick in 2014, the Army conducted a thorough internal review. We remain focused on supporting the Government of Afghanistan as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission.

■ **Armed Forces Covenant: Grants****Nia Griffith:**[\[293500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many grant applications made to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund were (a) accepted and (b) rejected in the last 12 months.

Johnny Mercer:

During the financial year 2018-19 the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust received 445 applications for funding from the Covenant Fund. 166 of these were awarded grants and 279 were unsuccessful.

In addition, under the Armistice and Armed Forces Covenant programme, 2,773 awards were made across the United Kingdom, providing in-kind support to help communities to access silhouettes that brought to mind those who went to war and did not return.

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

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

■ **Armed Forces: Deployment**

Crispin Blunt:

[292070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 4 September 2018 to Question 167831 and with reference to paragraph 87 of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's report of 6 August 2019 entitled The Role of Parliament in the UK Constitution: Authorising the Use of Military Force, how his Department determines whether an international deployment of the armed forces falls (a) above and (b) below the conflict threshold.

Mark Lancaster:

Whilst the term 'conflict threshold' was used during the oral evidence session for the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee to explain the difference between combat operations and wider military activity, it is not a formal term that the Ministry of Defence uses to define different operations. Broadly speaking there is a difference between military activity overseas which happens every day for a whole range of purposes, and military combat operations which are much rarer. Given the varying nature of military operations we do not believe it would be possible to establish a strict 'conflict threshold' definition, instead emerging military activity is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

■ **Armed Forces: Wakefield**

Mary Creagh:

[292884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel reside in (a) Wakefield District and (b) Wakefield constituency.

Johnny Mercer:

As at 2 October 2019, a total of 460 Regular and Reserve Armed Forces personnel were recorded on our Joint Personnel Administration system as having a primary address with a postal code in the Wakefield District. We do not record the constituency in which a primary address for our Service personnel falls.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement

Ruth Smeeth:

[\[293667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will announce the procurement timetable for the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle programme; and what proportion of the build will be undertaken domestically.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Mechanised Infantry Vehicle programme is currently under review and a decision is expected this year. If a contract is placed, it is anticipated that circa 60% by value of the contract spend will be with UK suppliers.

■ Army: Young People

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[293678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Army's review of Junior entry has been completed; and if he will place a copy of that review in the Library.

Mark Lancaster:

The Army's review of Junior Entry (JE) enlistment has concluded. The Armed Forces offer some of the best training and education to people anywhere in society. Those opportunities begin at 16 with around 1,300 Junior Soldiers graduating from Harrogate each year. The Army Foundation College at Harrogate is the only JE Phase 1 training establishment in the British Army and the JE is a tried and trusted means of engaging young people leading them to a successful Army career. The college aims to create a well-rounded junior soldier, physically, conceptually and morally. The delivery of training is conducted in accordance with a carefully synchronised college programme and is aimed to be progressive and provide variety with a balance between classroom, camp and field training.

This review considered how the Army can continue to attract the best young people under the age of 18 and, in doing so, maximise the talent of the individual to the mutual benefit of the individual, the Army and society improving their social mobility. The tendency for under-18 recruits to serve for longer than their over-18 peers and the relatively high proportion of junior entrants that promote to senior NCO ranks over the course of their careers benefits the Army and the individual.

The Review found that while the JE scheme is performing well and remains attractive to potential recruits, it is not well known and could be advertised more effectively. To recruit effectively the JE model must appeal to all, including females and the growing Black Asian and Minority Ethnic workforce in the UK.

A copy of the report of the Army's review of JE enlistment will be placed in the Library of the House.

■ Bahamas: Hurricanes and Tornadoes

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[293563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the support provided by UK armed forces to the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian.

Mark Lancaster:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is tasked to provide a timely and appropriate response to the region and, working with our colleagues from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Department for International Development (DfID), we delivered extensive humanitarian assistance and disaster relief support using our pre-positioned vessel from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA Mounts Bay).

Hurricane Dorian was of the scale that it warranted the provision of additional follow-on medical and liaison teams from the UK. The MOD is now reviewing the effectiveness of the operation.

The Governmental response to Hurricane Dorian is ongoing, with a DfID colleague deployed with the Bahamian government, providing recovery advice. Our intervention enabled the Bahamian government, international aid agencies and other nations to provide further relief.

■ Defence: Expenditure

Nia Griffith:

[\[292879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons RDEL in the Supplementary Estimates 2018-19 and the Main Estimates for 2019-20 are different for (a) infrastructure costs, (b) equipment support costs, (c) other costs and services and (d) administration costs.

Nia Griffith:

[\[292880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons the Resource AME in the Main Estimates 19-20 and the Supplementary Estimates 18-19 are different.

Nia Griffith:

[\[292881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons the Ring-fenced budgets in Main Estimates 19-20 and Supplementary Estimates 18-19 are different.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Supplementary Estimates 2018-19 relate to the activities described for 2018-19 budget, while the Main Estimates 2019-20 reflect the activities for the 2019-20 budget.

■ International Military Services: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [\[292965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the transfer of taxpayer funds, necessary for the IMS Ltd 2002 payment into court, was authorised by Parliament as per the requirements of the Ordnance Factories and Military Services Act 1984 .

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I will write to the hon. Member shortly with the requested information.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Repairs and Maintenance

Ruth Smeeth: [\[293666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assurances he has received from Lockheed Martin on the (a) quality of the canopy adhesive used on the F35 and (b) effect on its stealth capability of that adhesive.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Investigations into F-35 production, maintenance and repair procedures have resulted in a change of adhesive to address incidents of canopy transparency delamination. Any impact on aircraft capability caused by the delamination is restored by repair or replacement of the canopy transparency.

■ Ministry of Defence: Jainism

Gareth Thomas: [\[292806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will invite representatives of the Jain community to national events organised by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Johnny Mercer:

National Events led by Defence are discrete and each one will attract a varying attendance. The Department aims to ensure the widest possible representation, while maintaining relevance to the occasion being marked.

■ Persian Gulf: Navy

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[293565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to protect UK shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

Mark Lancaster:

The UK is committed to maintaining maritime security in the Gulf region, and safeguarding freedom of navigation. To this end, the Royal Navy has been accompanying Red Ensign Group flagged merchant vessels through the Strait and the UK has also joined the International Maritime Security Construct.

■ Shipbuilding: Recruitment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[292858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of IT specialists entering employment with UK shipyards.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSBS) acknowledges, having the skills within the UK to design, build, repair, and supply certain equipment and systems and integrate naval ships (and security sensitive equipment in all naval ships) is a key factor in the successful delivery of naval capability. We acknowledge that ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of properly skilled workers across the sector will require continued investment and support from Industry. BAE systems recently used advanced visualisation software to refine the design of our cutting-edge Type 26 Global Combat Ships. This highlights the increasing importance of IT skills for the future of UK Shipbuilding.

The question of apprenticeship and other recruitment is a matter for privately owned companies to determine, but as I'm sure you are aware, there are a variety of initiatives in place across the UK designed to support the development of skills, some are the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations. With regards to naval shipbuilding, the Maritime Enterprise Working Group with the support of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, MOD and the Society of Maritime Industries coordinate a long term programme to improve the industry's productivity and competitiveness, including current work to understand the underpinning skills base and roles.

■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[293495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the cost of Government Furnished Equipment for each of the five planned Type 31 Frigates.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[293496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the overall cost will be for each Type 31 Frigate once the cost of Government Furnished Equipment is added to the £250 million unit cost.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[293497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Government Furnished Equipment for the Type 31 Frigate will be transferred from decommissioned Type 23 Frigates.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There is an estimated baseline value of Government Furnished Equipment for the Type 31e Frigate programme, but it would be prejudicial to the commercial interests of the Ministry of Defence to disclose that estimate at this stage.

It is too early to specify the sources of Government Furnished Equipment that will be fitted to the Type 31 Frigates.

■ Unmanned Marine Vehicles

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[292857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans for further trials of Ecosub platforms in the next two years.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has already conducted environmental data gathering trials using Ecosub vehicles it has purchased. Over the next two years, the Department intends to conduct further assessments on these in a wider variety of military applications.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Stephen Twigg: [\[292797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 290584, whether his Department was aware of the Saudi Press Agency release of 14 September 2018 that stated that an RSLF helicopter crashed on operations in in Al-Mahra province in Yemen.

Mark Lancaster:

We closely monitor the situation in Yemen. The UK Ministry of Defence does not hold an official record of the incident in question.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ 5G: Brecon and Radnorshire

Jane Dodds: [\[293005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date she plans to start the roll-out of 5G in Brecon and Radnorshire constituency.

Matt Warman:

The Government is committed to becoming a world leader in 5G, and to provide access to a 5G signal for the majority of the population by 2027. The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review set out the Government's plan to create the right conditions for the deployment of 5G across the UK.

It is important to note that the vast majority of commercial rollout of 5G services will be delivered by industry, according to their own timeframes. All four Mobile Network Operators have confirmed plans to launch 5G services this year and will extend coverage to 50 towns and cities by the end of 2020.

Government is committed to ensuring that world-class connectivity is provided across the UK, wherever people live, work and travel. Good 4G mobile coverage will be central in laying the foundation for 5G rollout across the entire country.

Government is also taking action to build the business case for 5G by investing in a nationally coordinated testbed and trials programme. As part of this programme Government is testing 5G use cases across a range of sectors including in rural settings.

■ **British Board of Film Classification**

Fiona Bruce:

[\[292886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what meetings (a) she and (b) Ministers in her Department have had with the British Board of Film Classification to discuss the implementation of a new age certification regime since 24 July 2019.

Matt Warman:

Ministers and officials have had regular meetings and discussions with the British Board of Film Classification to discuss the implementation of a new age certification regime. Details of ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the Gov.uk website.

■ **Cybercrime: Skilled Workers**

Jo Platt:

[\[292998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 291081 on Cybercrime: Skilled Workers, for what reason the Answer did not include information on whether a target has been set for the number of people to be assisted by the third round of funding from the Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund.

Matt Warman:

The third round of the Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund closed for applications on 27 September. The department will review the bids received before considering appropriate targets and performance indicators for the third round of funding.

The Fund is designed to increase the number and diversity of individuals pursuing a career in the cyber security profession, through supporting and encouraging a sector-led approach to stimulating a sustainable cyber security retraining ecosystem.

■ **Digital Technology: Hate Crime and Sexual Harassment**

Jo Stevens:

[\[287654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of (a) sexual harassment and (b) misogynistic abuse against content creators in the digital economy.

Matt Warman:

We have made no specific assessment of this sort of abuse to date. We do recognise that some users are disproportionately affected by online abuse and we are taking action to address unacceptable behaviour online. The Online Harms White Paper, which was published in April this year, sets out the Government's plan to establish a

statutory duty of care to make companies take more responsibility for the safety of their users and tackle harm caused by content or activity on their services.

The Law Commission began Phase 2 of their review of abusive and offensive communications online in July 2019. This will review existing communications offences and make specific recommendations about options for reform, to ensure that criminal law provides consistent and effective protection against such behaviour. A final report is expected in early 2021.

■ Electronic Government: Data Protection

Mary Creagh:

[291344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will publish the accounts of the data ethics and compliance issues that her Department produced for the cross data tracking of Gov.uk users.

Matt Warman:

The Government Digital Service (GDS), based in the Cabinet Office, is implementing end-to-end performance monitoring so that [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk) can be designed to ensure that people can access the information and services they need as easily as possible. Government departments are enabling GDS to centrally collect data on site usage across the [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk) estate, to provide an end to end, anonymised view of how people interact with government online. The data being analysed does not include any Personally Identifiable Information (PII), and GDS have put and technical and procedural controls in place to prevent personally identifiable information from being included by accident or malicious intent.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have been working with colleagues in the Government Digital Service (GDS) to ensure that any legal and ethical issues are considered and addressed. In developing the project, GDS have taken into account both the data protection regime and the Data Ethics Framework published by DCMS last year.

■ Huawei: 5G

Jo Platt:

[292999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the oral contribution of the previous Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport of 22 July 2019, Official Report, column 1135, on the Telecoms Supply Chain Review, whether her Department has set a timetable for the decision on what involvement Huawei should have in the provision of the UK's 5G network.

Matt Warman:

Decisions on additional controls relating to any supply chain company that poses significant security and resilience risks to UK telecoms are still under consideration. This is to allow the implications of the US entity listing on the telecoms market as a whole to be taken into account. These decisions will be announced in due course.

Graham P Jones:

[\[293531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on shared intelligence from the US Government on Huawei's proposed role in developing the UK's 5G network.

Matt Warman:

DCMS Ministers have regular discussions with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on a range of cyber security topics, including in relation to the UK's telecommunications networks.

Widespread deployment of 5G and full fibre networks is a primary objective of Government policy. The Government published the Telecoms Supply Chain Review in July, which recommended the introduction of a new framework for telecoms security based on evidence and a hard-headed assessment of the risks. The Government has not yet made a final decision on individual high risk vendors and the additional controls that will be applied to them.

■ **Internet Service Providers: Monopolies**

Jack Lopresti:

[\[292888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent steps her Department is taking to tackle Internet Service Provider monopolies.

Matt Warman:

This is a matter for Ofcom as the UK's independent competition regulator for telecoms. However, in general, the UK has a competitive Internet Service Provider (ISP) market as a result of the work that Ofcom has done to promote competition at the retail level by providing regulated access to BT Openreach's national broadband network.

The Government is also working with Ofcom to promote greater competition at a network level, as this is one of the key ways to meet our ambition for nationwide coverage of faster and more resilient gigabit broadband networks as soon as possible.

■ **Internet: Bullying**

Ian Blackford:

[\[292262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure that (a) Facebook, (b) Snapchat and (c) other internet sites remove inappropriate posts that bully and cause harm to individuals and groups.

Matt Warman:

The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems and

processes in place to deal with harmful content on their services to keep their users safe. Compliance with this duty of care will be overseen and enforced by an independent regulator. Companies will be held to account for tackling a comprehensive set of online harms, including cyberbullying.

Alongside the White Paper, we also published the Social Media Code of Practice. This sets out actions that the Government believes social media platforms should take to prevent bullying, insulting, intimidating and humiliating behaviours on their sites.

■ Malvern Hills Trust

Harriett Baldwin: [\[290901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of using the Charity Commission Section 72 mechanism to consolidate the five Acts of Parliament governing the Malvern Hills Trust into one new piece of legislation.

Nicky Morgan:

Where a charity is established or governed by statute, its governing Act(s) of Parliament can be amended by a scheme made by the Charity Commission under section 73 of the Charities Act 2011. Such a scheme is given effect by a Statutory Instrument, subject to Parliamentary approval. This procedure is considered to be simpler, cheaper and quicker than pursuing a new Private Bill to make the changes.

My officials have held constructive discussions with the Charity Commission and the Malvern Hills Trust, which is seeking a scheme under section 73 of the Charities Act 2011 to modernise and consolidate its governance provisions. The Trust is currently consulting on its proposals.

■ Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[292891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to prevent mobile telecommunications companies from financially exploiting consumers with roaming charges in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Matt Warman:

The government has legislated to protect consumers from unexpected charges if there is no Brexit deal. This is to ensure that obligations on mobile operators to apply a financial limit on mobile data usage while abroad is retained in UK law. The limit has been set at £45 per monthly billing period. This means you cannot continue to use mobile data services when roaming unless you actively chose to continue spending. The government has also legislated to continue to ensure that consumers receive alerts when they are at 80% and 100% data usage.

EDUCATION

■ Academies: Assessments

Sandy Martin:

[293003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department will take to ensure the timely publication of (a) GCSE and (b) other test results by multi-academy-trust run schools.

Nick Gibb:

Results for academies in multi-academy trusts (MATs) are published in the same way as other schools via the school and college performance tables. Results can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>.

Key stage 4 results – which include GCSEs – will be published in October 2019 (provisional) and January 2020 (revised). Key stage 2 results will be published in December 2019, and 16-18 in October 2019 (provisional), January 2020 (revised) and March 2020 (additional measures).

The Department also publishes MAT performance measures alongside school-level performance measures. MATs must have at least three schools that have been with the MAT for at least three years to be included in the measures. Key stage 2 MAT measures will be published in December 2019, KS4 in January 2020, and 16-18 in March 2020.

■ Academies: Finance

Eddie Hughes:

[293702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to review the 3000 pupil threshold for academy capital funding; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Schools and those responsible for school buildings receive condition funding through different routes depending on their size and type. All schools receive funding to spend on their capital priorities through an annual Devolved Formula Capital allocation. In addition, local authorities and larger multi-academy trusts (MATs) receive a School Condition Allocation (SCA) to invest in their priorities across the schools for which they are responsible. MATs are eligible for SCA if they have five or more academies and at least 3,000 pupils. The Department also offers an allocation to academy chains (groups of more than one trust) where they meet the size criteria as a group and have opted in. Smaller or stand-alone academy trusts and sixth form colleges can bid for funding to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF). The funding available through CIF and SCA is calculated on the same basis per pupil.

For financial year 2020-21, condition allocations, the eligibility threshold for SCA will remain the same. The Department keeps funding policy under review, and we are undertaking a new school Condition Data Collection (CDC), due to complete later this year. The CDC will provide a high-level assessment of the condition of state funded schools in England and will help inform future capital funding policy.

■ Adoption Support Fund: Finance**Sir Michael Fallon:** [\[292067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has for future funding of the Adoption Support Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

We are currently finalising the department's spending plans for 2020-21 and the Adoption Support Fund is being considered as part of this work. In March 2019, ahead of budgets being finalised, we put in place transitional funding for families whose recommended packages of support ran into 2020-21 so they could continue to access therapy for up to 9 months at a time. Funding for the Adoption Support Fund beyond 2021 will be considered as part of the full Spending Review planned in 2020.

■ Brexit: Publicity**Mary Creagh:** [\[293502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the oral contribution of the hon. Member for Walthamstow of 25 September 2019, Official report, column 786, for what reasons schools received images on their digital noticeboards on the Prime Minister and Brexit; and what steps he is taking to prevent money from the public purse being spent on such material.

Nick Gibb:

The images in question originated from a private company that supplies digital services to schools. They were not funded by the Government or part of any Government campaign.

■ Children: Restraint Techniques**Mr Steve Reed:** [\[292919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to reduce the incidences of the use of restraint in children's homes.

Michelle Donelan:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, for the first time, introduced quality standards for children's homes. Through the guide to the regulations and quality standards, we make clear that the only purposes for which restraint can be used are to prevent injury to any person; prevent serious damage to the property of any person; or prevent a child who is accommodated in a secure children's home from absconding from the home.

When restraint involves the use of force, the force used must not be more than is necessary and should be applied in a way that is proportionate. The regulations are clear that restraint that deliberately inflicts pain cannot be proportionate and should never be used on children in children's homes.

Where restraint is used, records must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the incident, identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concerns emerge.

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting children's homes and on inspection will review the policies and procedures homes have in place for the use of restraint, including the recording of incidents. Ofsted will review individual cases of restraint to ensure practice is proportionate and meets the needs of the child. Where poor practice is identified, Ofsted can take enforcement action including issuing compliance notices where necessary.

■ Children: Social Services

Mr Steve Reed:

[292920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what indicators his Department uses to measure the effectiveness of the children's care system.

Michelle Donelan:

The department uses a wide range of indicators to measure the effectiveness of the children's care system. These are provided at local, regional and national level in the department's statistical first releases and brought together in our local authority interactive tool. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>.

We also use Ofsted judgements to assess the effectiveness of children's services. This enables the department to intervene where necessary, to follow up on any concerns in local authorities and to explore good practice.

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[293556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of demand for local authority-provided children's services.

Michelle Donelan:

The department publishes a range of statistics on trends in the level of demand for children's services. This data is available to all local authorities to help benchmark their services and can be found in the Local Authority Interactive Tool, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>.

In relation to children's social care, the department worked with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, HM Treasury and the sector to understand the level of funding needed for local authorities to meet demand and deliver statutory services in preparation for the 2019 Spending Round. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has now announced that local government is getting an additional £1 billion grant for social care for adults and children in 2020-21. This is in addition to the continuation of existing social care grants. Work to further our understanding of demand will continue as part of preparation for the next Spending Review.

■ Coram Family: Contracts**Layla Moran:** [\[292281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the decision by the House of Lords on 18 June 2019, whether his Department plans to reinstate and extend the contract with the Thomas Coram Foundation for the administration of a statutory Adoption Register.

Layla Moran: [\[292282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to introduce a statutory register of children who have not found adoptive parents within three months.

Michelle Donelan:

The contract to administer the statutory Adoption Register came to an end in March 2019. Since the Register stopped operating, the government has not received any feedback to suggest local authorities and adoption agencies are having difficulties in matching children because the statutory register has closed. The department continues to monitor matching of children with families and robust action will be taken if this changes.

As we set out on 18 June, we want to improve information and systems across fostering and adoption sectors. We are exploring the feasibility of introducing a system that can bring data together to support better communication and present it in one place that is user-friendly. We are working with the sector and software providers to test the best digital infrastructure to support adoption and fostering.

■ Department for Education: Travel**Ruth Jones:** [\[292410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2017.

Ruth Jones: [\[292420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2018.

Michelle Donelan:

In 2017, the department spent £456.00 on first class rail travel and £1,870.70 on standard class ministerial rail travel. Further to this, the department spent £16,946.69 on business class air travel and £4,390.77 on economy class air travel. In total, the department spent £23,664.16 on ministerial travel.

In 2018, the department spent £2,399.70 on first class rail travel, £3,931.15 on standard class ministerial rail travel and £576.00 on premium economy Eurostar travel. Further to this, the department spent £15,994.92 on business class air travel and £3,481.64 on economy class air travel. In total, the department spent £26,383.41 on ministerial travel.

■ Education

Layla Moran:

[\[293712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the implications of worst case scenario planning for the UK leaving the EU without a deal on the ability of (a) schools and (b) other education providers to provide adequate education provision.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is considering all aspects of how exiting the EU might affect schools and other education providers in England.

The Department is ready to leave the EU on 31 October 2019 and has well-developed plans for leaving the EU without a deal. The Department has issued advice for schools and other education providers on this, which is available on GOV.UK.

■ Erasmus+ Programme

Stephen Crabb:

[\[294121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure full funding for UK participants in Erasmus+ in the 2020-21 academic year.

Chris Skidmore:

The government places great value upon international exchange and collaboration in education and training. This will continue to be the case after we leave the EU and establish new relationships with academic institutions across Europe and the rest of the world.

We want to leave the EU with a deal but are preparing for a range of outcomes. Our officials are preparing for all eventualities. We are considering a wide range of options with regards to the future of international exchanges, which include potential domestic alternatives to the Erasmus+ programme for the 2020/21 academic year, should we need them.

■ Foster Care

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[292918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help local authorities recruit foster carers.

Michelle Donelan:

In Fostering Better Outcomes (2018), the department encouraged local authorities to consider joint recruitment efforts. To help with this, and to support local authorities to develop evidence-based recruitment approaches, the department is commissioning research on applying behavioural insight approaches to the recruitment of prospective foster carers and adopters.

In addition, the department is funding 7 feasibility studies in commissioning and sufficiency planning, bringing together local authorities with their partners to explore innovative practices, including collaborative approaches to foster care recruitment.

■ Free School Meals: Wallasey

Ms Angela Eagle:

[290695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children in primary schools in Wallasey constituency were eligible for free school meals in each year since 2010.

Michelle Donelan:

[Holding answer 30 September 2019]: The number of proportion of children in primary schools in Wallasey constituency who were eligible and claiming free school meals (FSM) is provided in the attached table.

Since April 2018, protections have been in place for FSM eligibility while Universal Credit is introduced nationwide. This has been the main driver in the increase in the proportion of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals as pupils continue to become eligible but fewer pupils stop being eligible.

This data is published at national and school level in the underlying data of the annual 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' statistical release. The 2019 publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>.

Attachments:

1. 290695_Table [290695_Number_and_proportion_of_FSM_students_since_2010.xls]

■ Highway Code: Education

Sir Greg Knight:

[292846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that young people are being appropriately educated on (a) safe use of the highway and (b) the contents of the highway code.

Nick Gibb:

Schools are free to cover teaching about road safety and the highway code as part of their duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, including through their personal, social, health and economic education provision. Schools can draw on resources available from many providers including, in relation to road safety, the THINK! Campaign developed by the Department for Transport, which is accessible here: <https://www.think.gov.uk>.

The Government also funds the Bikeability scheme which provides pupils with high quality cycling training. Bikeability allows pupils to gain practical skills and understanding of how to cycle on roads, and increases pupils' confidence and skills for all types of cycling.

■ Literature: GCE A-level

Jo Stevens:

[\[293617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the number of children taking English Literature at A-Level in the last 10 years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department values the three English A-levels and keeps the total number of English A-level entries under constant review. Overall, English is one of the top four most popular A-level subjects and has been a subject of choice for large numbers of students over the past 10 years. Studying English language or literature at A-level builds students' understanding and appreciation of the English language and the depth and power of our rich and varied literary heritage. It also helps develop valuable critical and analytical skills. The Department has sought to encourage take up of English literature A-level through the 16-18 performance tables.

The Department understands that students choose their A-level qualifications carefully in order to keep their future career options open. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects are required for studying a wide range of courses, and STEM skills are in shortage in the economy. The Department has seen total entries to STEM A-level subjects increase in 2019 compared to last year, despite a small decrease in the population, with an increase in the proportion of girls taking STEM subjects (3.2% increase). Entries in STEM subjects have now increased by 26.2% since 2010. Entries to history and geography have also increased this summer.

■ Maintained Schools: Construction

Wes Streeting:

[\[293660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funding options are available to enable the rebuild of local authority maintained schools without the need for academisation.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is rebuilding or refurbishing buildings in the worst condition at over 500 schools across England, through the Priority School Building Programme. This programme covers local authority maintained schools and academies and is expected to complete in 2021.

The Department's Condition Data Collection, due to complete this year, will provide a high-level assessment of the condition of state funded schools in England, and will help inform future capital funding policy and programmes. In addition, the Department has allocated over £7.4 billion in condition funding since 2015 to maintain and improve local authority, voluntary-aided and academy school buildings.

■ Political Parties: Advertising

Tom Watson: [292164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's policy is on political advertising in schools.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 3 October 2019]: Learning about politics is an important part of a broad and balanced education that prepares young people for adult life. All head teachers, however, are required to ensure impartiality and balanced treatment of political issues in schools.

■ Post-18 Education and Funding Review

Wes Streeting: [293661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government plans to implement the recommendations of the Auger Review in full or in part.

Chris Skidmore:

Philip Augar and his independent panel have provided the government with a detailed and comprehensive report. We are considering the report carefully, but we have not yet taken any decisions with regards to the recommendations put forward. We will provide Parliament with an update later this year.

■ Pre-school Education: Admissions

Angela Rayner: [293604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much of his Department's capital departmental expenditure limit was spent on creating new early years places in each financial year since 2010-11; and how many new places were created as a result of that spending.

Nick Gibb:

In 2012-13, the Department announced £100 million of capital allocations for local authorities to support implementation of early years education for two-year olds from lower income families. Local authorities were responsible for distributing this capital investment and so the Department does not hold information on the number of places created by this funding.

The Department allocated £100 million over 2016-17 and 2017-18 to local authorities to support successful bids to the Early Years Capital Fund (EYCF). The Department regularly assesses the progress of these projects and will publish the outcomes in due course when all projects have completed. Information detailing the outcomes from the EYCF bidding round will be published at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-capital-fund-2017>.

In July 2019, the Department announced the outcome of applications to the School Nurseries Capital Fund. This fund, of nearly £24 million for 69 projects, will help to create new high-quality school-based nursery places for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. The

profiling of this spend will depend on the progress of individual projects. The full list of successful projects for this fund can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-nurseries-capital-fund-list-of-application-outcomes>.

The Department will publish the outcomes in due course when all projects have completed.

■ School Exclusions Review

James Frith:

[291417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Timpson review of school exclusion: Government response, published in May 2019, what progress his Department has made on establishing the practice programme to embed effective partnership working to better equip schools to intervene early for children at risk of exclusion.

James Frith:

[291418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Timpson review of school exclusion: Government response, published in May 2019, what progress his Department has made on providing guidance on the use of in-school units and managed moves; and what the timetable is for his Department's consultation on that guidance.

James Frith:

[291420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Timpson review of school exclusions, when his Department plans to issue updated guidance on school exclusions to schools.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 4 October 2019]: The Department is taking forward an ambitious programme of reform which will respect head teachers' powers to use exclusion, while equipping schools to support children at risk of exclusion and ensuring excluded children continue to receive a good education. The Department has already begun engaging with stakeholders including schools and local authorities on these reforms.

In addition, the Government committed to establishing a practice programme that embeds effective partnership working between local authorities, schools, alternative provision, and other partners.

This will better equip schools to intervene early for children at risk of exclusion and to ensure that the most effective provision is put in place for those who are excluded.

The Department will also re-write guidance on exclusions and behaviour to offer clearer, more consistent guidance to schools on managing behaviour, the use of in-school units, managed moves and the circumstances where it may be appropriate to use exclusion.

Guidance will be published by summer 2020 and more details on the practice programme will be announced in due course.

■ Schools

Layla Moran: [291609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the responses to the survey of local authorities undertaken by his Department in September 2019 on schools' preparedness for the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 2 October 2019]: The Department for Education has made extensive preparations for EU exit. This includes publishing comprehensive advice for schools, liaising with school food suppliers; and working closely with Kent County Council and Kent academy trusts, in recognition of the specific issues that might face schools in that part of the country. This is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-exit-no-deal-preparations-for-schools-in-england/eu-exit-no-deal-preparations-for-schools-in-england.

As part of this, the Department recently wrote to local authorities and academy trusts with additional information and asked them to complete a survey, to help inform our understanding of schools' readiness.

The Department for Education will be considering the helpful feedback provided by the education sector on preparedness for the UK leaving the EU without a deal. This information will help us to ensure the sector is prepared to leave the EU on 31 October 2019.

Alongside completing this analysis, the Department will consider how best to share the findings from the survey.

Layla Moran: [292986]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU without a deal on school suppliers listed as part of Operation Kingfisher.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is monitoring businesses and sectors across the country to help ensure they are fully prepared for when the UK exits the EU. The Department is considering how best to support them in the event of a no deal. The Department has been clear that should there be no deal, we would support the economy through whatever appropriate action is needed.

■ Schools: Garston and Halewood

Maria Eagle: [291242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the National Funding Formula on (a) the number of school places, (b) spending

per pupil, (c) school spending reserves and (d) the sustainability of school funding in Garston and Halewood constituency.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 4 October 2019]: Local authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there is a school place available for every child. The Department provides local authorities with basic need funding for every new place that is needed, based on local authorities' own data on pupil forecasts. They can use this funding to provide places in new schools or through expansions of existing schools, and can work with any school in their local area, including academies and free schools. Liverpool has been allocated £56.6 million to provide new school places from 2011-21, and Knowsley has been allocated £3 million.

The Department trusts schools to manage their own budgets and the vast majority are operating with a cumulative surplus, with only a small percentage having a deficit. The Department will be publishing data on maintained school reserves in 2018-19 in October, following the introduction of the national funding formulae. 2018-19 data on academy reserves will be published next spring.

On Friday 30 August, the Department announced a three-year settlement which will provide a total increase in funding of over £14 billion over the next three years, including an additional £7.1 billion in 2022-23, bringing the core schools' budget in that year to £52.2 billion. This means we can 'level up' school funding by raising the minimum per pupil funding for secondary schools to £5,000 next year, and the minimum per pupil funding for primary schools to £3,750 in 2020-21 and £4,000 in 2021-22.

Overall, school funding is increasing significantly by 5% and the Department is increasing funding for the lowest-funded schools even faster. In addition, the Department are providing for an increase in per pupil funding at least in line with inflation for every school in England next year, with most schools attracting real terms increases.

This funding announcement means further increases for every school in Garston and Halewood over the next three years. The Department will be publishing school-level details in October.

■ **Schools: Uniforms**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[292980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment has he made of the financial effect on low-income families of the cost of a school uniform.

Nick Gibb:

It is for the governing body of a school (or in the case of academies, the academy trust) to decide whether there should be a school uniform, what it will be and how it should be sourced. To support them to do this the department issues best practice guidance which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>.

This makes clear that we expect schools to ensure uniform costs are reasonable. Our guidance clearly states that uniform items should be easily available for parents to purchase and schools should keep compulsory branded items to a minimum. It also states that schools should avoid single-supplier contracts, but where schools do choose to enter into such contracts, they should be subject to a regular competitive tendering process.

No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to a school and this Government has announced its plan to put the current guidance on a statutory footing at the earliest opportunity.

■ Sex and Relationship Education: Marriage

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[293479]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that the curriculum for relationships education continues to include marriage as one of the issues when children are being taught about family life as set out in the Education Act 2002.

Nick Gibb:

The Government believes that pupils need to understand the nature of marriage and its importance. The new subjects of relationships education (primary) and relationships and sex education (secondary) cover the age-appropriate knowledge that all children need to form safe, positive relationships based on respect and to prepare them for adult life, including family life.

Following the passage of the regulations for the new subjects, the Department published the statutory guidance in June 2019. The guidance covers teaching about different types of relationships, and this is addressed throughout the content. Under the topic of families, for example, the guidance sets out that by the end of primary education pupils will know “that marriage and civil partnerships represent a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong”. By the end of secondary education, pupils will know “what marriage and civil partnerships are, including their legal status”. Teaching about family and parenting is also included in these subjects.

The guidance also notes that teaching about families requires sensitive and well-judged teaching based on knowledge of pupils and their circumstances. The guidance can be accessed here:

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

■ Sixth Form Colleges: Assessments

Sandy Martin:

[293004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to teachers at 6th-form colleges on gaining timely access to pupils' previous school's test results in order to set meaningful targets for pupil improvement.

Michelle Donelan:

The government's response to the Workload Advisory Group report 'Making Data Work' provides advice about proportionate use of data for pupil improvement including target setting. The report can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/754349/Workload_Advisory_Group-report.pdf.

The department already provides digital systems that enable schools and colleges to access pupils' prior attainment data.

Special Educational Needs**Preet Kaur Gill:****[291605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps he has taken to support pupils with SEND.

Michelle Donelan:

The department is taking steps to ensure that every child and young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can achieve well in education, find employment and lead a happy and fulfilled life.

We will be investing over £700 million in additional high needs funding to support young people with complex SEND in education. This represents an increase of over 11% on the funding available this year, bringing the total high needs funding budget to over £7 billion.

We have launched a cross-government SEND review to improve how children and young people with SEND are supported in the current system. In parallel with the review, we have also committed to reviewing the SEND Code of Practice by the end of 2020 to identify where the code needs to be clarified or where additional guidance would be helpful, drawing on the expertise of stakeholder organisations.

The department has a contract with the Whole School SEND Consortium to embed SEND within approaches to school improvement and to equip the school workforce to deliver high quality teaching for all pupils with SEND. The programme of work includes building a Community of Practice with the involvement of 10,000 schools by 2020 and 15,000 schools by 2022, across the 8 Regional School Commissioner regions.

Caroline Nokes:**[293542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children with special educational needs in (a) Hampshire, (b) Southampton and (c) the UK are unable to attend school as a result of not having an education, health and care plan in place.

Caroline Nokes:**[293543]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children with special educational needs in (a) Hampshire, (b) Southampton and (c) the UK are only able to attend school for part-days as a result of not having appropriate SEND support in place.

Michelle Donelan:

The information requested is not held centrally.

We have invested heavily in improvements to support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including the announcement last month of more than £700 million in additional funding for high needs in 2020-2021. This is an increase of 11% on the 2019-2020 budget.

As a result of reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014, we have seen the introduction of published local offers for each local area; new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for those with more complex needs; new statutory protections for 16-25 year olds in further education; and the setting up of Ofsted and Care Quality Commission SEND inspections to hold local areas to account and drive up standards.

Our SEND review, which was announced 6 September, will consider the quality of SEND provision 5 years on from the launch of Children and Families Act. This includes the extent to which schools, colleges and local authorities are providing the best possible support for children and young people with SEND, with or without an EHC plan.

■ Special Educational Needs: Speech and Language Disorders**Geraint Davies:****[293418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve support for children and young people in secondary schools who have speech, language and communication needs.

Michelle Donelan:

We believe that schools should be able to offer effective support to all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We will be investing over £700 million in additional high needs funding to support children with complex needs. This will bring the total high needs funding budget to over £7 billion.

Although this additional funding will help, we recognise that more needs to be done to ensure this investment works well for all children and young people with SEND. The government recently announced a review of SEND which aims to improve the services available. Further information can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-review-into-support-for-children-with-special-educational-needs>.

We have also recently undertaken a call for evidence on the financial arrangements that underpin provision for children and young people with SEND and those who need alternative provision. We will make sure that the evidence gathered and views expressed are fed into the department's SEND review.

In addition to this, the department has provided £3.9 million funding to the National Association for Special Educational Needs, on behalf of the Whole School SEND consortium, for a 2-year programme of work to embed SEND into school

improvement practice and equip the workforce to deliver high quality teaching across all types of SEND. A SEND regional leader and deputy SEND leader has been appointed in each of the 8 Regional School Commissioner areas to build a Community of Practice and engage with local networks, including local champions in speech, language and communication needs, to enable the identification and sharing of good practice.

■ Sure Start Programme

Angela Rayner:

[293605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much of his Department's capital departmental expenditure limit was spent on Sure Start in each financial year since 2010-11.

Michelle Donelan:

Capital to support Sure Start children's centres was made available to local authorities through the Sure Start, Early and Childcare grant in the 2010-11 financial year. Details of expenditure on capital grants to support Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare in 2010-11 are set out on page 77 of the department's annual report and accounts for 2010-11 at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-annual-report-and-accounts-financial-year-2010-to-2011>.

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2015, capital funding for children's centres was made available from the Schools Capital Funding Allocations. Since 1 April 2015, capital funding for children's centres has been made available through the School Condition Allocations. It is for local authorities to decide how to prioritise their capital funding according to local needs. Published data on capital allocations is available on the GOV.UK website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding#funding-allocations-for-2019-to-2020>.

The department does not record how much capital local authorities spend on children's centres.

■ Teachers: Pay Settlements

Angela Rayner:

[292253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to apply national pay settlements to teachers working in academy schools.

Nick Gibb:

[Holding answer 3 October 2019]: The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) covers the pay and conditions for teachers in maintained schools in England. Non-maintained schools, including academies and free schools, are responsible for determining the pay and conditions of their staff themselves. Such schools are therefore not obliged to follow the statutory arrangements set out in the STPCD, although they may still choose to do so if they wish.

As academies have freedoms and flexibilities to set the rate of pay for their teachers outside of the national pay arrangements, it is up to them to determine whether, and in what circumstances, to pay any annual uplift or performance-related pay.

Stephanie Peacock:

[293690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 September 2019 to Question 281772 on Teachers: Pay Settlements, from which Departmental budget the £105 million transferred into the Teachers' Pay Grant in the current financial year was drawn.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has been able to fund the additional investment of £105 million into the existing Teachers' Pay Grant through reprioritising funding from within the Department's existing 2019-20 budgets. This includes additional headroom funding that has become available as a result of adjustments to forecasts, where expected spend is now lower than anticipated when budgets were set. Where the Department has identified available resources, it has prioritised it to the front line.

■ Vocational Guidance: Disability

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[292167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what means of redress is available to disabled young people who haven't received independent careers advice.

Michelle Donelan:

We want all children and young people, no matter what their special educational need or disability (SEND), to reach their full potential and receive the right support to succeed in their education and in their transition to adult life. The SEND Code of Practice explicitly states that all children and young people with SEND should be prepared for adulthood and that this preparation should start early.

Governing bodies must ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 to year 13 and every school must publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents. The department has published statutory guidance for schools to help them meet this duty: www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools.

In the event of suspected non-compliance with the duties and statutory guidance, parties involved should first try to resolve the matter and if a complaint remains unresolved, the department's officials have the power to intervene.

■ Wigan University Technical College

Lisa Nandy:

[292903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding from the public purse was provided to Wigan University Technical College in each year from 2013 to 2019.

Lisa Nandy:

[292904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department took steps to try to prevent the closure of Wigan University Training College.

Lisa Nandy:

[292905]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department has provided to students and their families since the decision to close Wigan University Training College.

Michelle Donelan:

The closure of any school is always a last resort and we will always act in the best interests of the young people involved. The department explored all possible options to secure the future of Wigan University Technical College (UTC) before this decision to close it was taken.

A breakdown of the revenue funding provided to Wigan UTC as requested is provided below:

2013/14	£920,609.40
2014/15	£1,208,318.97
2015/16	£1,437,209.90
2016/17	£987,893.99
2017/18	£1,665,302.72
2018/19	£1,318,574.62
Total	£7,537,909.60

Capital costs for the UTC are published and can be found at :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-funding-for-open-free-schools>.

The local authority and academy trust provided support to all students and parents affected by the closure and the department worked with both the local authority and the trust to ensure that school places were identified that met the needs of each individual child.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agricultural Products: Prices

Deidre Brock:

[290377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 December 2017 to Question 118331, what progress has been made on the programme of analytical work into understanding how withdrawal from the EU will affect the UK; and if she will publish the interim findings of that work.

George Eustice:

This analysis only applies to England as agricultural policy is devolved.

As part of our preparations to leave the EU, we have carried out a rigorous programme of analytical work that has assessed the impact of various EU exit scenarios on the UK farming sector.

Part of that programme has included modelling work co-funded by the four UK agricultural departments. In August 2017, the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI-UK) published this analysis in the report "Impacts of Alternative Post-Brexit Trade Agreements on UK Agriculture: Sector Analyses Using the FAPRI-UK Model". It considers the impact of different trading scenarios on many farming commodity sectors. The full report is available on the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute website here:

<https://www.afbini.gov.uk/sites/afbini.gov.uk/files/publications/FAPRI-UK%20Brexit%20Report%20-%20FINAL%20Clean.pdf>

In addition, the evidence and analysis paper which accompanied the publication of the Agriculture Bill (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment-policy-statement-2018>) provides analysis of the various ways farmers are likely to be affected by the movement from the area based payments of the Common Agricultural Policy to being rewarded for the public goods they produce under Environmental Land Management.

■ Animal Welfare**Mark Field:****[291552]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the UK will be a listed country for animal health in relation to (a) ungulates, (b) equines (c) dogs, (e) cats and (f) ferrets in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Zac Goldsmith:**i) Ungulates, Equines and commercial movement of cats, dogs and ferrets**

The United Kingdom submitted its application to allow exports of live animals and animal products to the European Commission in January 2019.

The UK continues to undertake constructive engagement with the European Commission on third country listing, and has already provided the necessary assurances requested by the European Commission in order for the relevant Committee to consider listing the UK as a third country for exports of live animals and animal products. This would ensure that exports of ungulates (hoofed animals), equines and commercial movement of cats, dogs and ferrets to the EU would continue in a no deal.

The relevant Committee meeting to vote on our listed status is expected to be scheduled and meet ahead of exit date.

ii) Non-commercial movement of cats, dogs and ferrets

Non-commercial movement of cats, dogs and ferrets is covered by the EU Pet Travel Scheme which has 3 categorisations of third country: unlisted, Part 1 listed and Part 2 listed.

Third countries can apply to the European Commission to be listed under the EU Pet Travel Scheme. The United Kingdom submitted its application to allow the UK to become a Part 1 listed third country under Annex II of the EU Pet Travel Regulations to the European Commission in January 2019. It is for the Commission to consider our application for listed status. The UK is likely to be treated as an unlisted country under the EU Pet Travel Scheme if it leaves without a deal.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis Strategy Review

Dr David Drew: [\[292084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Government plans to publish its response to the Godray Report on bovine TB.

George Eustice:

The Government response to Professor Sir Charles Godfray's 2018 review of Defra's Bovine TB eradication strategy will be published in due course.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Dr David Drew: [\[290620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if the Government will investigate reports of badger culling within the FERA Woodchester Park research centre.

George Eustice:

I can confirm that no badger culling is taking place specifically within the Animal and Plant Health Agency's Woodchester Park research centre.

Sue Hayman: [\[290861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much her Department spent from the public purse on the badger cull in each of the last five years.

George Eustice:

Bovine TB is one of the greatest animal health threats to the UK and the disease costs the public over £100million a year, with the cost to the farming industry around £50m a year. Badger control costs to Government in each of the last five years are as follows (to the nearest thousand pounds):

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Licensing and compliance monitoring	£1,036,000	£1,003,000	£1,284,000	£1,289,000	£1,312,000
Humaneness	£1,515,000	£154,000	£392,000	£506,000	£352,000

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
monitoring, including post mortems					
Efficacy monitoring	£17,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Advice and assessments	£294,000	£460,000	£646,000	£728,000	£410,000
Other costs, including equipment	£205,000	£162,000	£53,000	£49,000	£1,000
Total	£3,067,000	£1,779,000	£2,375,000	£2,572,000	£2,075,000

Badger control policing costs to Government in each of the last five years are as follows (to the nearest thousand pounds):

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Policing	£1,392,000	£1,809,000	£3,030,000	£4,047,000	£3,237,000

Further information can be found on gov.uk at the following link:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/bovine-tb-government-badger-control-costs.

Dr David Drew:

[292083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions has she had with the Welsh Government on strategies for the eradication of bovine TB.

George Eustice:

Regular meetings are held with the Welsh Government, Scottish Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland to discuss bovine TB eradication strategies and ways forward to tackle the disease. These meetings involve both policy officials and Chief Veterinary Officers.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Vaccination

Dr Matthew Offord:

[292889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of vaccinating all cattle against the TB virus.

George Eustice:

Vaccination of cattle against the bovine TB bacterium is a part of our long-term eradication strategy. There are merits to cattle vaccination as it has the potential to reduce the prevalence, incidence and spread of TB. As with badgers, however, BCG (*M. bovis* - bacille Calmette-Guérin) vaccination is not completely effective, and has no impact on already infected cattle. It also sensitises cattle to the tuberculin skin test used to identify animals infected with TB, so we need to licence an effective test that differentiates between the disease and the vaccine before deployment would be possible.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Brexit**Chris Ruane:**[\[291547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many non disclosure agreements in relation to preparations for the UK leaving the EU without a deal her Department has signed with (a) private organisations and (b) public organisations between (i) 23 June 2016 and 22 August 2019 and (ii) since 22 August 2019.

George Eustice:

The requested information on the number of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) entered into between specific dates is not held centrally by Defra, and could not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Eggs: Salmonella**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[290282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure that eggs infected with salmonella do not reach consumers.

Zac Goldsmith:

We have national programmes to control salmonella in poultry and protect public health, which require regular sampling of laying flocks. Where laying flock samples test positive for regulated strains of salmonella, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) will alert the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Public Health England (PHE) and restrictions on the eggs will be put in place to protect public health which will apply for the life of the affected flock. Eggs from such flocks cannot be sold as fresh table eggs, but must be either processed by heat treatment to eliminate salmonella before entering the food chain, or disposed of outside the food chain as Animal by Products.

The General Food Law EU Regulation 178/2002 will be transferred into UK law at the point of exit by the European Union (Withdrawal) Act. Inoperabilities in 178/2002 have been addressed by The General Food Law (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. EU Regulation 178/2002 lays down that food placed on the market must be safe to eat - it must not be 'injurious to health' or 'unfit for human consumption'. Food businesses are required to notify the competent authorities, such as the local authority or the FSA, if they suspect that a product placed on the market

does not comply with safety requirements. When Salmonella infection is confirmed in a laying flock the FSA works with industry, APHA and local authorities to ensure appropriate action is taken to safeguard public health.

■ Fishing Catches

Luke Pollard:

[\[291398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the (a) effectiveness of the discard ban in reducing discards of quota species of fish and (b) the levels of fishermen complying with that ban.

George Eustice:

Since its introduction, the Government has worked with the catching sector, the wider industry and other Member States for the phased implementation of the landing obligation which came fully into force on 1 January 2019. There has been no formal assessment of the effectiveness of the landing obligation, however, there has been considerable progress in quantifying challenges such as choke risks and developing solutions to mitigate their impact. Solutions include enhancing and promoting the use of gear selectivity measures and maximising the use of quota management flexibilities to ensure quota is used efficiently and effectively to mitigate choke risks.

Since January 2018, the MMO recorded a total of 132 infringements related to the landing obligation: of which 2 resulted in no further action, 24 resulted in a written rebrief, 104 resulted in a verbal rebrief and 2 are under investigation. We are also exploring the use of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM), alongside other monitoring and enforcement tools, as a cost-effective and efficient way of monitoring fishing activity and ensuring compliance.

■ Food Supply

Catherine West:

[\[291487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment has been made of the ability of UK suppliers to meet demand for domestic food consumption in the event of trade disruptions arising from the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

George Eustice:

The UK Government has well established ways of working with the food industry. The industry is experienced in dealing with scenarios that can affect food supply and Defra Ministers and officials meet with them regularly to support their contingency planning as we prepare to leave the EU.

The UK's high degree of food security is built on access to a range of sources including robust supply chains across a range of countries, in addition to strong domestic production. Consumers have access to a wide range of food products when they shop and this will continue once we leave the EU. If we have to leave with no deal, there will not be an overall shortage of food in the UK. While we are reliant on imports of certain salad vegetables at this time of year, our market profiles clearly

demonstrate strong UK winter production of many root vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, swedes, turnips, parsnips and leeks.

Jo Stevens:

[\[292934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will place in the Library each estimate that has been provided to Government since January 2019 on the potential reduction in the flow of food between the EU and the UK in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement if the Government (a) takes and (b) does not take steps to mitigate the reduction in those flows.

George Eustice:

In response to the Humble Motion passed on 9 September 2019, the Government published on GOV.UK on 11 September 2019 the Yellowhammer Planning Assumptions dated 2 August 2019.

■ **Import Controls: Animals**

Mark Field:

[\[291553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to EU Official Control Regulation 2017/625 due to come into force on 14 December 2019, whether the Government has contingency plans to process consignments of live animals in the event that they are returned to the UK after being refused entry into the EU if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Zac Goldsmith:

The Government has strong plans in place to manage issues or risks arising from the import or export of animals and agri-food products. This includes managing the risk of high risk journeys, measures to safeguard welfare and processes required if animals or goods are rejected at EU borders.

If the UK is listed and the exported animals meet standards at least equivalent to those required for production and trade between the Member States and consignments are in compliance with the relevant Official Controls Regulation (OCR) and associated tertiary legislation, then in principle those animals should not be refused entry.

Where the consignments are not in compliance with the relevant requirements and present a risk to animal and human health, the OCR and tertiary legislation provide for a range of measures ranging from quarantine (pending further decision of the competent authorities at Border Control Posts), destruction of consignments, special treatment and re-despatch. The regime for these measures is essentially the same as the one provided under Regulation 882/2004.

UK goods, including live animals that are exported to the EU in the event the UK leaves the EU without a deal, and rejected at an EU Border Control Post can travel back to the UK on the same documents issued for their journey. The consignment will need pre-notification to the UK of its return, but will be able to return to the UK via any port of entry and will not be subject to routine veterinary checks at the port of entry.

Transporters of animals have a legal duty to protect the welfare of their animals and should only plan journeys if they are sure that the journey is viable and compliant with welfare requirements, for instance on maximum journey times.

They will need to check that all certification is in place and all EU import conditions are met to minimise the likelihood of being returned.

■ Livestock: Animal Welfare

Sue Hayman: [\[290866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidance her Department has issued to livestock transport companies on the welfare of animals in the event of delays to freight crossing to and from the EU if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Zac Goldsmith:

Defra has issued guidance to animal transporters on the processes that apply in relation to import and export rules and animal welfare in the event of no deal and contingency measures that can be taken to mitigate the risks to welfare of animals being stuck in queues. Transporters have a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of their animals.

■ Milk: Contracts

Alan Brown: [\[292402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the timescale is for the launch of the public consultation on milk supply contracts; and if she will make a statement.

Alan Brown: [\[292403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of mandatory contracts for milk supply contracts; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The Government has made clear that it intends to introduce mandatory written contracts in the dairy sector and will consult on proposals after the UK leaves the EU.

■ Mining: Seas and Oceans

Paul Farrelly: [\[293480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect of sea-bed mining on the ocean ecosystem.

Zac Goldsmith:

I refer my Hon Friend to the reply previously given on July 29 to PQ 277681.

■ **Pets: Disease Control**

Nic Dakin:

[\[292211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the number of invasive insect species in the UK as a result of the removal of compulsory tick treatment for pets at UK border; and whether there are any plans to reintroduce the tick treatment policy.

Zac Goldsmith:

We do not hold the data requested for the number of invasive insect species in the UK as a result of the removal of compulsory tick treatment for pets at the UK border.

Tick surveillance has shown that tick distribution and abundance is changing throughout the UK for many reasons, including habitat and climate change. Small numbers of localised infestations with non-native tick species have been reported in recent years, and imported rescue dogs have been demonstrated to be a higher risk for carrying ticks or being infected with tick-borne diseases. For these reasons, Defra strongly encourages pet owners to treat their pets to safeguard their animals against ticks and tick transmitted diseases when travelling abroad. Further advice can be obtained from their local vet, and via the Public Health England (PHE) leaflet available on GOV.UK.

Whilst Defra has no immediate plans to amend the tick controls for pet animals entering the United Kingdom, we remain concerned about the threat of ticks and tick-borne disease. As such, a risk assessment is being planned to guide future policy and Defra continues to monitor the disease situation through the Tick Surveillance Scheme.

■ **Pets: Tagging**

Thelma Walker:

[\[291606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to require vet practices to scan and check microchip registration of dogs and cats on their first appointment to ensure that pet and owner match.

Zac Goldsmith:

The Government agrees with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) that it is good practice for veterinary practices to scan dogs that are presented to them and particularly at the first appointment. However, the Government supports BVA's position that vets should not be legally required to do so, due to the impact it could have on the vet-owner relationship. On 23 April 2019, the BVA met campaigners to discuss this issue. The BVA undertook to remind veterinary practices to scan dogs in line with best practice and help owners understand the importance of keeping their microchipping records up to date.

■ Veterinary Medicine

Deidre Brock:

[\[290372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of vets that will be required at ports and airports to issue export health certificates in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal; and how many vets are currently available.

George Eustice:

Exporters are required to have certified Export Health Certificates before goods leave the approved premises, therefore we do not anticipate any need for additional certifying officers at UK borders.

To date, over 1000 vets are registered as official veterinarians that can certify Export Health Certificates – an increase of around 60% since February 2019. We have put in place a number of measures to increase certifier capacity, including introducing a new certification support officer role to assist certifiers in collating the evidence needed, as well as providing free training for vets.

■ Veterinary Medicine: Vacancies

Chris Ruane:

[\[290709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Operation Yellowhammer HMG Reasonable Worst Case Planning Assumptions paragraph 6ii, if he will list all financially viable mitigations to fully close risks associated with UK veterinary medicine availability in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Zac Goldsmith:

Veterinary medicines have been recognised by the Government as critical to human and animal welfare and national security.

The majority of veterinary medicines used in the UK (and ingredients and components to make them) are either produced in or enter via the EU. The Government is working with animal health companies who have been carrying out extensive EU Exit contingency planning for all EU Exit scenarios, including no deal, covering all aspects of their supply chains, from regulatory compliance and stocking levels to logistics and customs. This includes, as appropriate, increasing stocks of product in the UK, changing supply routes, transferring marketing authorisations and other regulatory processes.

Additional cross-government activities include a comprehensive business/trader readiness information campaign to help individuals and businesses understand what they need to do to get ready for Brexit and the Government's Freight Capacity Framework is intended to support the continued supply of Category 1 goods (to include veterinary medicines) in the event of border disruption.

Supply is expected to cope with a normalised ordering pattern.

With this planning in place, we are confident that we have made every effort to ensure continuity of supply of veterinary medicines in the UK.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Brazil: Rain Forests**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[293489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Brazilian counterpart on the increase in deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon over the last 12 months.

Christopher Pincher:

Ministers and our Embassy in Brasilia routinely engage with the Brazilian Government on many environmental issues, including deforestation. The Foreign Secretary spoke to the Brazilian Foreign Minister about the forest fires in the Amazon on 27 August, and I also discussed this issue with the Brazilian Ambassador at a meeting on 4 September.

■ **British Nationals Abroad: EU Countries**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[293709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which EU countries (a) have and (b) have not yet implemented arrangements equivalent to the UK's EU Settlement Scheme to enable UK citizens to obtain leave to remain in their EU country of residence.

Christopher Pincher:

Protecting the rights of both British Nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the United Kingdom is an absolute priority for this government. Should we leave the EU with a deal, Member States must implement a system for British Nationals to secure their residency rights. This could be a constitutive system like the EU Settlement Scheme, or a declaratory system. Existing rules and regulations relating to Citizens' Rights will continue to apply until the end of the Implementation Period.

In the event of No Deal, all Member States have now enacted or drafted legislation to protect British Nationals' rights, including residency rights. However, the processes, timeframes and criteria for registering and applying for residency vary significantly by Member State. We are engaging intensively with Member States, asking them to reciprocate fully the United Kingdom's guarantee to EU citizens. We are also urging Member States to ensure robust implementation and effective communication of their plans. We encourage British Nationals living in the wider EU to subscribe to their relevant Living in Guide on gov.uk for up-to-date information on the steps they need to take to get ready for Brexit.

■ British Overseas Territories and Commonwealth: Fires**Paul Girvan:** [\[292973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department plans to make an assessment of the level of risk of wild fires to (a) Commonwealth nations and (b) British Overseas Territories.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have not made any assessments. The assessment of wildfire risk is the responsibility of Commonwealth and Overseas Territories Governments.

■ Burma: Arms Trade**Lyn Brown:** [\[292885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support a UN-enforced arms embargo against Myanmar.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK is a longstanding supporter of an arms embargo on Myanmar. An EU arms embargo is already in force. In April 2018 the British Government secured a tightening of this to prohibit the export of dual-use goods and to place restrictions on communications equipment and military cooperation. We assess that there is currently insufficient support in the UN Security Council for a UN-enforced arms embargo against Myanmar.

■ Chile: Political Prisoners**Helen Goodman:** [\[292862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish his Departments papers in relation to the release of political prisoners from Chile in 1975.

Christopher Pincher:

We do not have any plans to publish papers in relation to the release of political prisoners from Chile in 1975.

■ China: Uighurs**Mr Jonathan Lord:** [\[294157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the treatment of the Uighur people by the Chinese Government.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

On 26 September during an Urgent Question on Hong Kong I set out the UK's serious concerns about the credible reports of over a million Uyghur Muslims being held in so-called "re-education camps". As I stated in the House, we will continue to ensure that these concerns are expressed directly with Chinese authorities. We also

raise the issue multilaterally: the UK recently co-hosted an event on Xinjiang at the UN General Assembly where the Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, called for China to allow UN observers unfettered access to the region. The former Foreign Secretary highlighted our concerns about Xinjiang with Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi during his last visit to China. The former Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific did the same with Vice Minister Guo Yezhou during his last visit to China.

■ **Diplomatic Service: British National (Overseas)**

Emma Reynolds:

[\[292900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of detainees abroad who hold a British National (Overseas) passport who have been provided with consular assistance in each year since 2010.

Andrew Stephenson:

Since 2010 the FCO have responded to 139 requests for assistance from British Nationals (Overseas) who were arrested or detained. As of September 2019 the FCO is providing ongoing assistance to 45 British Nationals (Overseas) who remain in detention.

CATEGORY	NEW DETENTION CASES
2010	15
2011	17
2012	13
2013	14
2014	20
2015	10
2016	15
2017	15
2018	10
2019	10
Grand total	139

■ EU Countries: Diplomatic Service**Rachael Maskell:** [\[293643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many members of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service work in the institutions and bodies of the EU.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

There are fewer than 5 Foreign Commonwealth Office members of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service working in the institutions and bodies of the EU.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Chief Scientific Advisers**Norman Lamb:** [\[292161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many meetings he had with his Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Foreign Secretary has not met with his Chief Scientific Adviser in the period 1 June to 31 August 2019. However, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers' have continued to have contact with the Department's Chief Scientific Adviser, and her office, during this period.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Official Hospitality**Ruth Jones:** [\[292432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much his Department spent on refreshments in (a) 2017 and (b) 2018.

Christopher Pincher:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) expenditure is tracked by financial year. Spend on refreshments is captured as part of the FCO's total Catering costs.

The total spent on Catering Services for the financial year 2018/19 was £2,460,089.42 . The total spent on Catering Services for the financial year 2017/18 was £2,588,495.42 .

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Public Appointments**Eddie Hughes:** [\[293703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress his Department has made on appointing a director-general level champion for freedom of religious belief.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Rehman Chishti MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review. Work has begun to implement the recommendations in a way that

will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. We are considering how to take forward the recommendation to appoint a Director General champion for freedom of religion or belief.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Travel

Ruth Jones:

[\[292413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2017.

Christopher Pincher:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is by definition a global organisation which uses travel as an essential part of its role.

The table below details the FCO's expenditure for financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18 on ministerial travel by First class rail; Second class rail; Business class air travel; Premium Economy class air travel; Economy class air travel; and a total of these five sums.

The figures represent travel booked through the Government's nominated travel agency.

FINANCIAL YEAR	FIRST CLASS RAIL TRAVEL	STANDARD CLASS RAIL TRAVEL	FIRST CLASS AIR TRAVEL	BUSINESS CLASS AIR TRAVEL	PREMIUM ECONOMY AIR TRAVEL	ECONOMY AIR TRAVEL	TOTAL
2016/17	£0.00	£159.10	£2,057.00	£802,152.04	£16,095.19	£65,341.90	£885,805.23
2017/18	£0.00	£324.40	-£2,916.27	£752,078.99	£39,535.85	£87,474.29	£876,497.26

Ruth Jones:

[\[292423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2018.

Christopher Pincher:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is by definition a global organisation which uses travel as an essential part of its role.

The table below details the FCO's expenditure for financial years 2017/18, and 2018/19 on ministerial travel by First class rail; Second class rail; Business class air travel; Premium Economy class air travel; Economy class air travel; and a total of these five sums.

The figures represent travel booked through the Government's nominated travel agency.

FINANCIAL YEAR	FIRST CLASS RAIL TRAVEL	STANDARD CLASS RAIL TRAVEL	FIRST CLASS AIR TRAVEL	BUSINESS CLASS AIR TRAVEL	PREMIUM ECONOMY AIR TRAVEL	ECONOMY AIR TRAVEL	TOTAL
2017/18	£0.00	£324.40	- £2,916.27	£752,078.99	£39,535.85	£87,474.29	£876,497.26
2018/19	£230.00	£87.30	£2084.00	£827,716.94	£46,250.87	£116,323.74	£992,692.85

■ Helicopters: Saudi Arabia

Stephen Twigg:

[\[293423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 290584, whether the Saudi Government reported the RSLF helicopter crash of 14 September 2018 in Al-Mahra province in Yemen to his Department.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The British Government hold no official record of the incident in question.

■ Hong Kong: Politics and Government

Dr David Drew:

[\[292081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have plans to hold meetings with the delegation from Fight for Freedom Stand With Hong Kong to discuss the recent events in Hong Kong.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Neither the Foreign Secretary nor other Foreign and Commonwealth Office ministers have plans to meet this organisation, but we will consider all meeting requests on their merits when they are received.

■ Hong Kong: Violence

Dr David Drew:

[\[292080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made on (a) human rights, (b) police violence and (c) repression in Hong Kong to (i) his Chinese counterpart, (ii) the Chinese Ambassador to the UK and (iii) the Government in Hong Kong; and what response has been received to those representations.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We are in regular contact with the Governments of Hong Kong and China on this issue. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam on 9 August, where he raised our concern about the situation in Hong Kong and the police's response to the protests. He also raised Hong Kong with Chinese State

Counsellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi in Bangkok on 31 July, where he underlined that the UK and China have a joint and legal commitment to the freedoms enshrined in the Joint Declaration.

The Chinese Ambassador to the UK was summoned to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on 3 July to meet the Permanent Under Secretary and Head of the Diplomatic Service, Sir Simon McDonald, where he was told the comments he made on UK policy towards Hong Kong were unacceptable and inaccurate. Since that date FCO officials have been in regular and frequent contact with senior officials at the Chinese Embassy in London to discuss the situation in Hong Kong, including on the right to peaceful protest and the use of force by police in Hong Kong.

■ Huawei: 5G

Graham P Jones:

[\[293530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions the Government has had with the US Government on shared intelligence on Huawei's proposed role in developing the UK's 5G network.

Christopher Pincher:

Widespread deployment of 5G and full fibre networks is a primary objective of Government policy. The Government published the Telecoms Supply Chain Review in July, which recommended the introduction of a new framework for telecoms security based on evidence and a hard-headed assessment of the risks. The Government has not yet made a final decision on individual high risk vendors and the additional controls that will be applied to them. Our international partners must take their own approach based on their own circumstances, network architectures, capabilities and risk assessments.

The United States of America and the United Kingdom are natural, resilient and strong partners and allies, and we will continue to work closely together, including on the issue of telecoms security.

■ India: Diplomatic Relations

Mike Gapes:

[\[293431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his Indian counterpart; and what was discussed at that meeting.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have regular contact with the Government of India at all levels. The Foreign Secretary met the Indian Minister of External Affairs Dr Jaishankar on 1 August at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bangkok. The Foreign Ministers discussed a range of issues including UK-India bilateral relations, regional issues and opportunities for the future. They have spoken on the telephone subsequently.

■ India: Politics and Government

Lyn Brown: [\[291568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with (a) state government officials, (b) state government ministers (c) union government officials and (d) union government ministers in the Indian state of Assam on the implementation of the National Register of Citizens in that state.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We regularly engage with Indian Union and State Government Ministers and officials on a range of human rights matters and raise issues where appropriate. On 27 September, officials from the British High Commission in New Delhi raised the National Register of Citizens in Assam, including the future status of those excluded from the register, with the Assam State Minister for Health and Finance. We await further details of what next steps the Government of India will take.

Lyn Brown: [\[291569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2019 to Question 169229 on India: Politics and Government, if he will make an estimate of the number of people living in the Indian state of Assam who are at risk of being confined in detention camps in the next 12 months.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have not received reports of any new cases of people detained, arrested, or sent to detention camps, nor that anyone has been deprived of citizenship due to the publication of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The State Government has announced there will be no immediate detention for those left off the NRC. Those excluded can appeal to Foreigners Tribunals run by the State Government under the direction of the Union Home Ministry. Our High Commission in New Delhi and Deputy High Commission in Kolkata continue to monitor the situation.

Lyn Brown: [\[291570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 11 September 2019 to Question 169229 on India: Politics and Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the implementation of the National Register of Citizens in the Indian state of Assam on (a) the level of risk of mass deprivation of liberty, (b) the level of risk of mass statelessness, (c) rights of active and passive suffrage, (d) freedoms of speech and assembly, in particular of local religious and political leaders, (e) religious freedoms, and (f) incidents of suicide.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have not received reports of any new cases of people detained, arrested, or sent to detention camps, nor that anyone has been deprived of citizenship due to the publication of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The State Government has announced there will be no immediate detention for those left off the

NRC. Those excluded can appeal to Foreigners Tribunals run by the State Government under the direction of the Union Home Ministry. Our High Commission in New Delhi and Deputy High Commission in Kolkata continue to monitor the situation.

■ Kashmir: Armed Conflict

Gill Furniss:

[\[293682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291427 on Kashmir: Armed Conflict, whether actions to de-escalate the tensions were agreed in those discussions.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

In his discussions with Prime Minister Modi of India and Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan, the Prime Minister reiterated the UK's longstanding position that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people, and underlined the importance of maintaining dialogue. The Foreign Secretary also expressed concerns and called for calm in his discussion with his counterpart Dr Jaishankar. We encourage India and Pakistan to find lasting diplomatic solutions to maintain regional stability. We welcome the Indian Government's stated intention to return the situation to normalcy and lift the remaining restrictions.

■ Kashmir: Human Rights

Mike Gapes:

[\[293427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered-Kashmir and Pakistan-administered-Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently. The continued use of detentions and the continued restrictions on communications are worrying. It is important that individual rights are fully respected and that there is constructive dialogue with affected communities. We have raised our concerns with the Governments of India and Pakistan.

■ Kashmir: Politics and Government**Mike Gapes:** [\[293428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterparts in (a) India and (b) Pakistan on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We are following the situation in Kashmir closely and are in regular contact with the Governments of India and Pakistan. The Foreign Secretary has raised his concerns about the situation with the Indian Minister for External Affairs Dr Jaishankar. In addition to this the Prime Minister has spoken to both Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Imran Khan about the situation, underlining the importance of maintaining dialogue. Most recently he discussed the issue with Prime Minister Khan in New York on 23 September. The Minister of State responsible for South Asia has also had regular engagement with the Indian and Pakistani High Commissioners and raised the situation in Kashmir with Minister Naqvi during their meeting in New Delhi on 3 October. Events in Kashmir can have regional and international implications and we continue to urge calm and caution from all.

Mike Gapes: [\[293429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

I refer the honourable member to PQ 293428.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[292968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department recognises Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe as a hostage of Iran as per the terms of the UN Hostages Convention.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not consider that Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's detention amounts to hostage-taking under the Hostages Convention 1979. In particular, the Convention expressly states that it does not apply to situations where the offence takes place wholly within a single State and in which both the hostage and perpetrator are nationals of that State. We do not accept our nationals being used as diplomatic leverage and exercising diplomatic protection in Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case formally raised it to a State-to-State issue. We continue to raise her case at the most senior levels; most recently the Prime Minister raised his concerns with President Rouhani on 24 September.

■ Pakistan: Diplomatic Relations

Mike Gapes:

[\[293430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met his Pakistani counterpart; and what was discussed at that meeting.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have regular contact with the Government of Pakistan at all levels. The most recent high level contact was on 23 September, when the Prime Minister met Prime Minister Imran Khan in the margins of the UN General Assembly. They discussed the strong bilateral relations between the UK and Pakistan, Kashmir, the upcoming visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and regional issues, including tensions with Iran and peace efforts in Afghanistan.

■ Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review

Eddie Hughes:

[\[292976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, what progress he has made with his counterparts at the UN on enhancing the protections afforded to (a) Christians and (b) other minority religions in the Middle East.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The persecution of Christians and other minority groups in the Middle East, remains of profound concern to us. The British Government is strongly committed to standing up for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) all over the world, including the Middle East. This commitment was reiterated by the Prime Minister in a statement Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon delivered on his behalf on 22 August, as well as by the UK Delegation to the OSCE on 19 September, and most recently in Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon's statement on 27 September at the UN General Assembly.

Bishop Philip's report has identified specific steps the British Government can take to address the issues faced by persecuted Christians around the world. We have accepted the recommendations in full and Rehman Chishti, MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB, is overseeing their implementation. This work will include exploring how best to deliver a new UN Security Council Resolution on protecting Christians and other minorities in North Africa and the Middle East.

Eddie Hughes:

[\[292977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the Cabinet plans to discuss the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Work has begun to implement the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. In accordance with the Bishop's recommendation, the

former Foreign Secretary wrote to Ministerial counterparts to ask them to take note of the Review's recommendations. We are now considering how we might best take forward a Cabinet discussion of Freedom of Religion or Belief in a way that galvanises cross-governmental action on this issue.

Eddie Hughes:

[\[293704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians; what progress he has been made on naming the phenomenon of Christian discrimination and persecution.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Rehman Chishti MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review. Work has begun to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. On naming the phenomenon of Christian discrimination and persecution, we believe that a definition is best agreed upon by the Christian communities themselves. If a term is agreed, we will consider how it might add value to our work on freedom of religion or belief.

■ Prisoners

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[292969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what criteria the Government uses to recognise someone as a state-held hostage.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[293676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what obligations the Government has to protect UK citizens that are held hostage by a foreign government.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

In any individual case, the Government will look at all the circumstances concerned. This includes consideration of the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages 1979. The Convention expressly addresses situations in which an individual commits the offence of hostage-taking; it does not define the circumstances in which a State could be responsible for hostage-taking. In considering whether or not someone is a hostage under the Convention, the UK will have regard to the definition of hostage-taking at Article 1 and the exemption for offences which take place wholly within a State in which both the hostage and perpetrator are nationals of that State.

In considering what action to take to assist a British national overseas, the Government will always take into account any relevant international law obligations and UK policy. Our public guidance sets out that the UK can provide consular support to British nationals detained by foreign governments outside the UK including making

early contact, notifying family and friends on request and offering information about the local legal system. The guidance makes clear that we cannot get people out of prison or detention, however we will consider approaching local authorities if an individual is not treated in line with internationally-accepted standards.

■ **Serhiy Rusynov**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[293490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Russian counterpart on the release of the Ukrainian student Serhiy Rusynov, who has been held for almost a year held by Russian backed separatists in Donbas.

Christopher Pincher:

We are aware of reports concerning Mr Rusynov's imprisonment in a non-government controlled area of Eastern Ukraine. We remain extremely concerned about the lack of access for human rights bodies to non-government-controlled territories in Eastern Ukraine. It is essential that independent investigations take place to deliver accountability for all serious allegations of violations. We have called upon Russia to use its influence over the separatists to provide this access and to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

■ **Sino-British Joint Declaration**

Dr David Drew:

[\[292079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of (a) the Chinese Government's compliance with the Sino-British Declaration and (b) the effect of that declaration under international law.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Sino-British Joint Declaration is a legally binding treaty, registered with the UN, that remains in force. The UK, as a co-signatory, has an obligation to monitor its implementation closely, and we are committed to doing so. We respect China's sovereignty but we also believe it is important to speak out where we have concerns and to make sure that the Joint Declaration, recognised in international law, is upheld.

The government reports to Parliament at six monthly intervals on implementation of the Joint Declaration. The next Six Month Report will be published shortly. The government has not assessed to date that China has explicitly breached the Joint Declaration, with the exception of the involuntary removal of Mr Lee Po, a British citizen, to mainland China without any due process under Hong Kong Special Administrative Region law in 2015. That incident constituted a serious breach and undermined the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" which assures Hong Kong residents of the protection of the Hong Kong legal system.

■ Ukraine: Foreign Relations**Paul Farrelly:** [\[292854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to support the work of local non-governmental organisations, journalists and lawyers operating in occupied Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk.

Christopher Pincher:

We are concerned by the crackdown on the right to freedom of expression in illegally annexed Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk. The British Government provides financial support to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which works to report and reduce human rights violations and abuses in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. We also support the work of Global Rights Compliance, which builds the capacity and resources of human rights defenders in order to identify human rights violations in Crimea.

During my recent visit to Ukraine, I met representatives from several Crimean non-governmental organisations to discuss the challenges they face as a result of Russia's continued attacks on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. I made clear the United Kingdom's condemnation of these attacks.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention**Stephen Twigg:** [\[292796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 290584, whether his Department was aware of the Saudi Press Agency release of 14 September 2018 that stated that an RSLF helicopter crashed on operations in Al-Mahra province in Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We closely monitor the situation in Yemen. We do not hold an official record of the incident in question.

Stephen Twigg: [\[293426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question 286088 on Yemen: Military Intervention, what additional information has he received from the coalition partners on the attack on a detention centre in Dhamar, Yemen on 1 September 2019.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We have received no additional information on the reported attack on 1 September in Dhamar province, Yemen. We take very seriously allegations that detainees and civilians were killed in the attack and therefore welcome the Saudi-led Coalition (SLC) referral of the incident to the Joint Incident Assessment Team and await its findings. The UK takes every opportunity to raise with Saudi ministers and senior leadership within the SLC the importance of International Humanitarian Law compliance, and of the need for speedy, thorough, independent investigation and reporting where violations are alleged.

■ Yemen: Peace Negotiations

Stephen Twigg:

[\[293425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that local Yemeni organisations are involved in the peace process in that country.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK is supporting Yemen through £6.6 million of funding from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) this year. This funding will support different programmes, including bolstering the UN's capacity to facilitate the peace process, working with groups formally outside the formal peace process and establishing long-lasting conflict resolution mechanisms in Yemeni communities.

The UK will also continue to elevate and champion women peacebuilders in Yemen and provide spaces for Yemeni women to engage with the peace process and across the Tracks. We continue to support UN Women through the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security (Tawafaq). This Pact is a powerful platform for Yemeni women leaders to forge strategic links, develop effective coalitions, and raise awareness of women organisations.

We are also funding a Gender Advisor and Senior Inclusion Advisor within the UN Special Envoy's office to ensure the peace process is representative and inclusive. Through CSSF, we support a grassroots Track 3 initiative on women, peace and security to ensure local voices of Yemeni women are amplified in the peace process.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Autism and Learning Disability: Children

Barbara Keeley:

[\[293512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that all NHS staff who commission specialist services for (a) autistic children and (b) children with a learning disability have training in those conditions.

Caroline Dinenage:

We recognise the importance of commissioners having the skills and knowledge to commission high quality care and support for autistic children and children with learning disabilities.

We are working with the sector to develop a qualification for people who commission services for people with learning disabilities and autistic people to ensure that they have knowledge and skills to commission services that fully reflect the needs and aspirations of service users.

■ Bedford Hospital NHS Trust: Vacancies**Mohammad Yasin:****[293685]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of local health providers on medical staff vacancies at Bedford Hospital NHS Trust; and how many and what proportion of vacancies there are in each discipline.

Edward Argar:

It is the responsibility of employers to develop workforce plans to meet their local service needs. As such, there have been no specific discussions regarding medical staff vacancies at the Bedford Hospital NHS Trust between Departmental Ministers and health providers in the Bedford area.

NHS Improvement data shows that in England, approximately 86% of the 11,000 doctor vacancies are filled by bank (49%) and agency (51%) staff. There are over 700 (6%) fewer doctor vacancies than last year. Bank and agency staff are not solely used to fill the vacancies. In addition to the vacancy gap, the bank and agency staff also cover absence due to sickness leave, maternity/paternity and career breaks.

The latest NHS Improvement vacancy statistics are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-vacancies-survey/february-2015---june-2019-provisional-experimental-statistics>

■ Bedford Hospital: Mental Health Services**Mohammad Yasin:****[293687]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and East London Foundation Trust on plans to reinstate inpatient mental health beds in Bedford.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Bedfordshire clinical commissioning group (CCG) has confirmed to NHS England that the project to provide a mental health inpatient unit is in its early stages and that East London Foundation NHS Trust has made an undertaking to provide a mental health inpatient unit in Bedford.

Bedfordshire CCG has identified a potential site in Bedford town and are progressing options and feasibility for this with National Health Service and local authority partners. The CCG will be appointing an architect when contracts have been formalised. Business cases for capital and commissioned services will then be developed and approved through standard NHS England commissioning processes.

■ Bereavement Counselling**Mr Laurence Robertson:****[293435]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to improve access to bereavement care and support; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government's response to the independent review of choice in end of life care (July 2016) made clear that high quality bereavement care is a key component of good end of life care, supporting families and loved ones at this very difficult time in their lives. For this reason, a number of resources have been developed to help improve bereavement support and end of life care.

The funding and delivery of National Health Service bereavement services is a matter for local commissioners.

Providing better information and support to people bereaved by suicide is a key area for action in the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, all areas in England will have suicide bereavement services providing timely and appropriate support to families and staff by 2023/24.

■ Bereavement Counselling: Standards**Mr Laurence Robertson:****[293433]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which exemplar bereavement care pathways have been identified as models of good practice by his Department and NHS England; what effect they have had on improving bereavement support; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[293434]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department takes to share good practice in bereavement care across the health system; what progress his Department has made to end variation in bereavement care by 2020, as committed to in 2016 in response to the Review of Choice in End of Life Care; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government's response to the independent review of choice in end of life care (July 2016) made clear that high quality bereavement care is a key component of good end of life care, supporting families and loved ones at this very difficult time in their lives. For this reason, a number of resources have been developed to help improve bereavement support and end of life care.

Health Education England, in partnership with Skills for Care and Skills for Health, published a refreshed End of Life Care Core Skills Education and Training Framework in March 2017 which aims to standardise end of life care training and education, including around bereavement care. It is available at the following link:

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/services/item/536-end-of-life-care-cstf-download

The national bereavement care pathway for pregnancy and baby loss was launched in 2017 and seeks to increase the quality of, and reduce the inequity in, the bereavement care provided by healthcare professionals after the loss of a baby or pregnancy at any gestation. It is available at the following link:

<https://nbcpathway.org.uk/>

Guidance for NHS trusts on working with bereaved families and carers was published by NHS England in July 2018 and provides advice to trusts on how they should support, communicate and engage with families following a death of someone in their care. The guidance is available at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/publication/learning-from-deaths-guidance-for-nhs-trusts-on-working-with-bereaved-families-and-carers/

In December 2018, NHS England published 'When a child dies - a guide for parents and carers' to support parents through the child death review process and help them understand the support that is available. This is available at the following link:

www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/parent-leaflet-child-death-review.pdf

'Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care: A national framework for local action 2015-2020', published by the National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership, sets out the ambitions for palliative and end of life care and presents a framework for local action. This is available at the following link:

<http://endoflifecareambitions.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Ambitions-for-Palliative-and-End-of-Life-Care.pdf>

The importance of bereavement care is also reflected in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence quality standard on end of life care and other end of life care guidance, which commissioners should take into account when planning services for local populations. The quality standard is available at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs13/resources/end-of-life-care-for-adults-pdf-2098483631557

■ Blood: Contamination

Darren Jones:

[292334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will compensate (a) victims of and (b) family members affected by the contaminated blood scandal.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) was established in 2017 to provide dedicated financial support to people infected by HIV and/or hepatitis C through treatment with National Health Service-supplied blood or blood products, and their affected families. This scheme is currently administered by NHS Business Services Authority.

The Government announced a £30 million uplift to the financial support available to registered EIBSS beneficiaries on 30 April 2019.

The discretionary and non-discretionary payments made to beneficiaries and are on an ex-gratia basis; any award of compensation will depend on a determination of

legal liability, to which the Infected Blood Inquiry's determinations and recommendations may be relevant.

We are committed to working with counterpart schemes in the devolved administrations to look at the issue of parity of support across the United Kingdom and are engaging in discussions on this issue.

■ **Cancer: Screening**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[290955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for cancer test results (a) at York Hospital and (b) in England in 2014-15 and each subsequent year.

Jo Churchill:

Information on the average time taken to receive cancer test results is not collected centrally.

NHS England publishes monthly performance data against the waiting times standards for diagnostic tests (not exclusive to cancer) and waiting times data of people referred by their general practitioner (GP) with suspected cancer and those subsequently diagnosed and treated for cancer.

■ **Catheters: Research**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[291565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any funds are being made available from the public purse for Southampton University's trial to compare mixed multi/single-use catheter management with single-use catheter management by intermittent catheter uses.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[291566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which ethical committee gave consent to the Multicath study undertaken into reusable catheters by Professor Mandy Fader of Southampton University.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[291567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have been enrolled to use reusable catheters on the Multicath study undertaken by Professor Mandy Fader of Southampton University; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research. A trial to compare mixed multi/single-use catheter management with single-use catheter management for people with intermittent catheter use was funded by the Programme Grants for Applied Research programme in 2013 with a funding level of £2,374,857.

The project consists of several work packages, leading up to the clinical trial, including: identifying and describing how and why different catheters are

selected/prescribed from different viewpoints; developing, testing and comparing methods of reusing, storing and lubricating catheters to identify the most effective, safe and practical technique; developing a questionnaire to measure quality of life of people using indwelling catheters (IC); identifying which symptoms relate to urine infection in IC users; and finally carrying out a clinical trial to determine the acceptability of different catheter designs and the effect on quality of life and infection.

The clinical trial was approved by the South Central, Hampshire A Research Ethics Committee on 12 July 2019 and by the Health Research Authority on 9 August 2019.

As ethical approval has only recently been granted, no participants have been recruited to the trial to date.

■ Catheters: Standards

Rosie Cooper:

[\[291563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it remains the policy of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence that intermittent self-catheterisation is the gold standard approach to safe and effective catheterisation.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) develops guidelines for the National Health Service that are based on a thorough assessment of the available evidence and are developed through engagement with stakeholders, including public consultation. NICE guidelines describe best practice and healthcare professionals are expected to take them fully into account, but they do not override clinical judgement.

NICE has not published any specific guidance on self-catheterisation. It has published a number of guidelines that refer to catheterisation, including a guideline on healthcare-associated infections: prevention and control in primary and community care published in 2012.

■ Children in Care

Barbara Keeley:

[\[293513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendation in the Children's Commissioner's report, Far less than they deserve, on replacing the Transforming care programme, if he will (a) introduce and (b) fund a new strategy for children in care.

Caroline Dineneage:

'Building the right support', published in 2015 by NHS England, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services is the national plan in England for reducing the number of people with learning disabilities or autistic people who are inpatients in mental health hospitals. It set out a clear framework for commissioners to reduce inpatient capacity by developing more community services for people with learning disabilities or autistic people with behaviour considered challenging.

The NHS Long Term Plan prioritises services for children and young people and commits to achieving at least a 50% reduction in the number of people with a learning disability or autism who are inpatients, compared to the figure in 2015, by the end of 2023/24.

Developing new models of care for those at the highest risk of being subject to restrictive practice was one of the recommendations made by the Care Quality Commission in the interim report of its thematic review of restraint, seclusion and segregation. We have accepted the report's recommendations in full. We want a system that works for all people with learning disabilities and/or autism and provides the best possible care and treatment.

■ Clostridium: Health Services

Julie Elliott: [292908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of (a) the per patient cost to the NHS of treating C-difficile infection (b) the cost the NHS of treating bed-bound patients in hospitals as a result of that infection in the latest period for which figures are available.

Julie Elliott: [292909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of treating patients with (a) severe or life-threatening and (b) acute or mild C-difficile infection.

Julie Elliott: [292910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of treating patients with recurrent C-difficile infection in each of the last three years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Using data from United Kingdom hospitals, in 2017, Public Health England (PHE) estimated the cost of the first episode of Clostridium difficile (C. difficile) infection to be approximately £6000. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://academic.oup.com/jac/article/72/9/2647/3867671>

No estimate has been made of the cost to the National Health Service of treating bed-bound patients in hospital with C. difficile infection.

Severity definitions are not applied or recorded systematically for C. difficile. Therefore, it is not possible to estimate the cost to the NHS.

National statistics on C. difficile infection do not include the number or rate of recurrent cases in the United Kingdom therefore it is not possible to estimate the cost of treating patients with recurrent C. difficile to the NHS.

■ Databases

Jo Platt: [\[293726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many meetings Ministers in his Department have held with Ministers in the Cabinet Office on the National Data Strategy in the last 12 months.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

There have been no meetings between Ministers in the Department of Health and Social Care and Ministers in the Cabinet Office on the National Data Strategy in the last 12 months.

■ Dietary Supplements: Expenditure

Julie Elliott: [\[292911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much money the NHS spent on (a) probiotics and (b) prebiotics in the last (a) 12 months and (b) five years.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Digital is unable to determine which drugs are purely probiotic or prebiotic supplements, but has agreed with the Department to provide primary care data from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) on the net ingredient cost (NIC) for:

VSL#3 (BNF code 091104000BBNMA0)

Vivomixx (BNF code 091104000BBNUA0)

Symprove (BNF code 090900000BBKTA0)

These products have all been identified as probiotics by manufacturers upon application to the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances.

PCA data is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions prescribed in the United Kingdom and dispensed in the community in England. A time series for the years 2014 to 2018 is provided in the following table.

NIC of prescription items dispensed in the community in England for the three specified probiotic and prebiotics

British National Formulary Code and Drug Name	NIC (£)				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
091104000BBNMA0 VSL#3_Probiotic Food Supp Pdr Sach 4.4g	990,818	1,149,666	1,037,511	1,067,742	993,369
091104000BBNUA0 Vivomixx_Pdr Sach 4.4g	0	0	1,763	15,124	26,000
090900000BBKTA0 Symprove_Drink (2 Flav)	20	2,877	7,315	4,628	8,076
Total	990,838	1,152,543	1,046,589	1,087,494	1,027,445

Source: Prescription Cost Analysis

Notes:

Prescription information is taken from the PCA system, supplied by NHS Prescription Services, a division of NHS Business Services Authority, and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community i.e. by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts, or private prescriptions.

Prescribers are general practitioners, hospital doctors, dentists and non medical prescribers such as nurses and pharmacists.

NIC is the basic cost of a drug as used in primary care. This is the cost at list price excluding VAT, i.e. the price listed in the national Drug Tariff or in standard price lists and is not necessarily the price the National Health Service paid. It does not take into account any contract prices or discounts, dispensing costs, fees or prescription charge income, so the amount the NHS paid will be different.

Prescriptions are prescribed either by a paper prescription form or via an Electronic Prescription Service message. Each single item prescribed is counted as a prescription item.

■ Doctors: Complaints

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[292830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that junior doctors can make complaints about senior and consultant doctors (a) anonymously and (b) without repercussions to their career prospects.

Edward Argar:

The Government supports the right of staff working in the National Health Service, including junior doctors, to raise concerns and expects all National Health Service organisations to support staff that wish to do so. A National Guardian was appointed in 2016 and more than 1,000 Freedom to Speak Up local Guardians have now been appointed covering every NHS trust in England. They provide a safe place where staff members can take their concerns about both practice and behaviours in the NHS.

Speaking up about concerns is a core part of Health Education England's Quality Framework and in addition the junior doctor contract deal which the British Medical Association agreed earlier this year strengthens existing contractual safeguards, ensuring that junior doctors can raise issues through an exception reporting process – overseen by an independent guardian of safe working.

Health Services: British Nationals Abroad**Tom Brake:**[\[293411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on reaching an agreement with EU countries on a replacement for the S1 scheme.

Edward Argar:

The United Kingdom Government has proposed to all Member States that we should maintain existing reciprocal healthcare arrangements, including the S1 scheme, until 31 December 2020 if the UK leaves the European Union without a deal. These arrangements would safeguard healthcare for the hundreds of thousands of UK-insured persons who live in Europe.

I laid a Written Ministerial Statement ([HCWS1832](#)) on 26 September 2019, setting out the Department's progress on no-deal reciprocal healthcare arrangements, and updated information has been published on GOV.UK and NHS.UK on the situation for each Member State, including what arrangements have been put in place. These pages will be kept updated as further assurances from Member States are received.

Peter Kyle:[\[293664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to cover healthcare costs for UK nationals living in EU countries indefinitely until separate arrangements have been reached with each EU Member State.

Edward Argar:

The United Kingdom Government has proposed to all Member States that we should maintain existing reciprocal healthcare arrangements until 31 December 2020 if the UK leaves the European Union without a deal.

I laid a Written Ministerial Statement ([HCWS1832](#)) on 26 September 2019, setting out the Department's position on 'no deal' reciprocal healthcare arrangements, and updated information has been published on GOV.UK and NHS.UK on the situation for

each Member State, including what arrangements have been put in place. These pages will be kept updated as further assurances from Member States are received.

The UK will consider the long-term arrangements for reciprocal healthcare once we have left the EU.

■ Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch

Justin Madders:

[291586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch is required to meet in order to start an investigation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB) conducts independent investigations of the most serious patient safety concerns in National Health Service funded care across England. Its purpose is to improve safety through effective and independent investigations that do not apportion blame or liability. HSIB has published a set of criteria for its national and maternity investigations.

For national investigations the main areas which HSIB consider when deciding whether to investigate an incident are:

- Outcome impact – the affect on the people involved, including physical and emotional harm; the impact on services and whether the incident has reduced the services ability to delivery safe, reliable care; and whether the public view has resulted in any loss of confidence in that area of healthcare;
- Systemic risk – any wider system risk associated with the safety issue, how common or widespread it may be and whether it spans different locations or areas of healthcare; how long it has taken to be recognised and whether concerns have already been raised; whether the safety issue can worsen or spread to other areas of healthcare; and
- Learning potential – HSIB will always consider the potential to learn from an incident, leading to positive changes and improving patient safety across the healthcare system.

The main areas which HSIB follow for maternity investigations are:

The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists' 'Each Baby Counts' criteria, which include all babies who are at least 37 weeks gestation born following labour who have one of the following outcomes:

- Intrapartum stillbirth (where the baby was thought to be alive at the start of labour but was born with no sign of life);
- early neonatal death (where the baby died within the first week of life from any cause);
- severe brain injury diagnoses; and

- maternal deaths (death of a woman whilst pregnant or within 42 days of the end of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes).

■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy**

Steve McCabe:

[\[293445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Department has taken to ensure that women who are unable to use alternative forms of HRT have access to HRT patches.

Jo Churchill:

The Department fully understands that maintaining access to hormone replacement therapy (HRT) medications is vitally important to many people in this country.

We are aware of ongoing supply issues with some HRT transdermal patches due to manufacturing issues. We have been working closely with all suppliers of HRT transdermal patches to maintain overall supply to patients. Although some HRT transdermal patches are affected by supply issues, supplies of other alternative HRT transdermal patches have remained available.

■ **Import Controls: Animal Feed and Food**

Mark Field:

[\[291549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the capacity of UK Border Force to manage high risk food and feed that does not enter through a Border Inspection Post or Designated Point of Entry in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

Jo Churchill:

Third country high-risk food and feed consignments transiting the European Union destined for the United Kingdom will need to enter the UK at ports with the required facilities, such as Border Inspection Posts (BIP) and Designated Points of Entry (DPE) to undertake required controls. Following detailed analysis to determine the possible number of such transits, there is sufficient existing capacity at UK ports with those facilities to undertake all relevant import controls.

The importation of high-risk feed and foods that are not pre-notified to a port with a BIP or DPE or enter a port without a BIP or DPE are illegal imports and as such are subject to Border Force control.

■ **Junior Doctors and Students: Sexual Harassment**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[292852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Sexual Harassment of UK Doctors: Report 2019 published by Medscape on 1 October 2019, what steps his Department is taking to safeguard junior doctors and medical students against sexual harassment at work.

Edward Argar:

Employers are responsible for protecting their staff from sexual harassment by members of the public or other staff members. For doctors in training and medical students, this will include senior clinicians, educational supervisors and managers of training programmes. They are responsible for ensuring that their organisations provide supportive working environments that prioritise patient safety, educational outcomes and staff wellbeing.

Sexual harassment, a form of unlawful discrimination, should not be tolerated under any circumstances so staff who believe they have been subjected to it should report the incident(s). Employers should ensure they fully support these staff and work with them to ensure appropriate legal action is taken against perpetrators.

■ **Medical Equipment: EU Law****Chris Green:**[\[292265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the capacity of Notified Bodies under the terms of the Medical Devices Regulation to meet the demand for their services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medical Devices Regulation 2017/745 (MDR) will overhaul the current regulatory framework for medical devices.

A key aspect of the MDR is more stringent requirements placed on notified bodies, which conduct third-party conformity assessments on higher risk products. All European notified bodies must undergo a designation process under the MDR to ensure their capacity to comply with the enhanced standards. There is less than a year until the Regulation will be applied in full, and currently five notified bodies are able to assess devices against the MDR, compared to over 50 under the current legislation.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[293514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many referrals were made to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in England in each year from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Information on the number of child and adolescent mental health referrals in England is available in the following table. This information was not collected prior to 2016/17.

YEAR	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
England	204,022	281,429	396,841

Source: Mental Health Services Dataset - NHS Digital

Notes: A person may be referred more than once during any given year.

Annual figures are not directly comparable as the number of providers submitting data has increased year on year.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [293515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was between (a) referral and first assessment and (b) referral and treatment for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in England in each year from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Mental Health Services: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [293638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) mean and (b) median waiting time for talking therapies for patients accessing mental health services was in (i) York and (ii) each clinical commissioning group area since 2015.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Information on the mean and median waiting time for access to talking therapies through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services in each clinical commissioning group (including Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group) and specialist commissioning hub is set out in the attached tables.

Attachments:

1. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies [PQ293638 Data.xlsx]

■ NHS Improvement

Gordon Marsden: [293469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS Improvement on its progress in implementing the Kirkup governance report, published in February 2018.

Edward Argar:

NHS Improvement set out its response to the recommendations in the Kirkup report into issues at Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust in a paper to its Board on 22 March 2018. This was followed by a further paper to the NHS Improvement Board of 24 May 2018 providing an update on actions taken in response to the recommendations of the report. Both papers have been placed in the public domain and can be accessed at the following links:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Response_to_recommendations_review_Liverpool_Community_Health_NHS_Trust.pdf

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BM1831_Kirkup_update.pdf

The Interim People Plan, published by NHS England and Improvement in June 2019, sets out firm commitments for improving the leadership culture in the National Health Service and for strengthening the management and development of talent. A key associated initiative is the co-creation of an NHS Leadership Compact, by which to establish the cultural values and behaviours expected to be demonstrated by senior NHS leaders and the support and development they should expect to receive.

■ NHS Trusts: Public Appointments

Gordon Marsden:

[293465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 6.1 of the Report of the Liverpool Community Health Independent Review by Dr Bill Kirkup, published in January 2018, what steps NHS Improvement has taken to implement the recommendation that when approving Trust Board appointments, NHS Improvement should take note of the level of experience of appointees and level of risk in the Trust and should ensure a system of support and mentorship for Board members where indicated.

Edward Argar:

NHS Improvement set out its response to the recommendations in the Kirkup report into issues at Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust in a paper to its Board on 22 March 2018. This was followed by a further paper to the NHS Improvement Board of 24 May 2018 providing an update on actions taken in response to the recommendations of the report. Both papers have been placed in the public domain and can be accessed at the following links:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Response_to_recommendations_review_Liverpool_Community_Health_NHS_Trust.pdf

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/BM1831_Kirkup_update.pdf

The Interim People Plan, published by NHS England and Improvement in June 2019, sets out firm commitments for improving the leadership culture in the National Health Service and for strengthening the management and development of talent. A key associated initiative is the co-creation of an NHS Leadership Compact, by which to establish the cultural values and behaviours expected to be demonstrated by senior NHS leaders and the support and development they should expect to receive.

■ NHS: Drugs

Tom Brake:

[291521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the National Audit Office's report, Exiting the EU: supplying the health and social care sectors, published on 27 September 2019, (a) for how long and (b) at what cost his Department is procuring a dedicated courier service for urgent medicines and supplies secured from manufacturers in the EU.

Edward Argar:

The Department is doing everything appropriate to prepare for leaving the European Union. We want to reassure patients that our plans should ensure the uninterrupted supply of medicines and medical products once we have left the EU.

The Express Freight Service is intended to provide access to an end-to-end solution able to deliver small consignments on a 24-hour basis with additional provision to move larger pallet quantities on a two-to-four-day basis. The initial contract length will be for one year, extendable by a further one year, with sufficient flexibility to end the contract earlier if required. The total estimated value of services provided to the Department over the one year period of the contract is £4 million. Users of the freight solution would be required to pay for any capacity they use.

Tom Brake:**[291527]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) availability and (b) adequacy of stockpiles of (i) medicines, (ii) medical equipment and (iii) medical devices held by suppliers to prepare for the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Edward Argar:

The Department is doing everything appropriate to prepare for leaving the European Union. We want to reassure patients that our plans should ensure the uninterrupted supply of medicines and medical products once we have left the EU.

The Department, as part of our EU exit preparations, is implementing a multi-layered approach to mitigate potential disruption to supply, which consists of stockpiling where possible, securing freight capacity, changing or clarifying regulatory requirements, procuring additional warehousing, working closely with industry to improve trader readiness and putting in place the National Supply Disruption Response to manage potential shortages. Further details can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/medicines-and-medical-products-supply-government-updates-no-deal-brex-it-plans>

■ NHS: Sexual Harassment**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[292829]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the sexual harassment of NHS staff by (a) members of the public and (b) other NHS staff members.

Edward Argar:

Employers are responsible for protecting their staff from sexual harassment by members of the public or other staff members. Sexual harassment, a form of unlawful discrimination, should not be tolerated under any circumstances so staff who believe they have been subjected to it should report the incident(s). Employers should ensure

they fully support these staff and work with them to ensure appropriate legal action is taken against perpetrators.

The NHS Social Partnership Forum, chaired by Departmental ministers, is working with National Health Service system leaders, NHS organisations, staff and unions, to encourage the leadership and culture change required to eradicate bullying and all forms of harassment. Now in its third year, one of the “call to action” priorities is tackling sexual harassment.

The interim NHS People Plan, published on 3 June 2019, committed to developing a new offer for staff, part of which will be how to create a healthy, inclusive and compassionate culture, including a focus on tackling bullying and harassment. This is expected to be published, alongside the final NHS People Plan, later this year.

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[292831]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the sexual harassment of NHS staff on (a) patient safety and (b) quality of patient care.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Bullying and harassment are never acceptable in any National Health Service workplace, and the wellbeing of staff is paramount to the provision of safe patient care. All NHS organisations have clear policies in place to deal with reports of harassment and bullying. The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, who are now in place across all NHS trusts in England provide a safe place where staff can discuss their concerns about both practice and behaviours in the NHS.

As part of its inspection of individual providers and services, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carries out an assessment of whether providers have a strong emphasis on the safety and wellbeing of staff. This takes place under the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) ‘well-led’ framework, as an important influence on the culture of the organisation and the quality of care delivered.

■ **Psychiatric Hospitals: Children**

Barbara Keeley:

[293510]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will improve the collection of data on (a) length of stay and (b) delayed transfers of care in children’s mental health in-patient units to facilitate the setting of effective targets.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Through its Getting It Right First Time programme, NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently working with all inpatient providers to review a range of data metrics, including length of stay. As part of this, meetings will be held with each provider to review length of stay in their units, to undertake benchmarking, identify outliers and agree areas for improvement.

The child and adolescent mental health services clinical reference group has also set up a data working group which will have a focus on length of stay to identify potential areas for improvement.

Delayed transfer of care data is submitted by all NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams on a weekly basis so that there is a national overview. Robust and regular monitoring is undertaken by regional teams to track progress against discharge/transfer plans and processes are in place for escalating cases. The regional teams also review delayed transfers of care with providers as part of the routine contract monitoring arrangements and agree any necessary actions with them.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[293511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will establish a covenant to guarantee parental involvement in children's care at in-patient mental health units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England's inpatient service specifications already contain specific requirements on family and carer involvement. Paragraph 2.19 of the Tier 4 Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) general adolescent-service specification states that family and carer involvement should include, if appropriate:

- Rights to visits and phone calls with family/carers;
- Involvement with family/carers in providing a history; and
- Involvement of family/carers in appropriate treatment and planning for discharge.

The CAMHS Clinical Reference Group is developing a toolkit for parents and carers. This will provide guidance and good practise on involving parents or carers when a young person is admitted to an inpatient unit. Young Minds and the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Quality Network for Inpatient CAMHS are developing this in partnership. Reference to the toolkit and the requirement to facilitate access, will be included in all service specifications and, therefore, in provider contracts.

■ Social Services: Finance

Christian Matheson:

[\[292928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the green paper on funding social care.

Caroline Dinenage:

Adult social care is one of the most important priorities for this Government, which is why we will set out a plan to fix the care system and give everyone the dignity and security they deserve.

We are providing councils with access to an additional £1.5 billion for adult and children's social care next year. This includes an additional £1 billion of grant funding for adult and children's social care, on top of maintaining £2.5 billion of existing social

care grants. This will support local authorities to meet rising demand and continue to stabilise the social care system.

In addition, the Government will consult on a 2% precept that will enable councils to access a further £500 million for adult social care. This new funding will support councils to meet rising demand and continue to stabilise the social care system.

As the Prime Minister said on the steps of Downing Street, the social care crisis will be attended to once and for all. We will set out a plan in due course.

■ Vulnerable Adults: Deaths

Paul Farrelly:

[\[292855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to expand the safeguarding system used to investigate the deaths of vulnerable adults to include everyone who has died while street homeless.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The cross-Government Rough Sleeping Strategy, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in August 2018, sets out the commitments to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.

The Department of Health and Social Care has committed itself to work with Safeguarding Adult Boards to ensure that Safeguarding Adult Reviews are conducted when an adult who sleeps rough dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect them. The Care Act Statutory Support Guidance sets out the criteria for carrying out a Safeguarding Adult Review, regardless of whether the adult is homeless or not.

The Department has no imminent plans to extend the safeguarding system to investigate the death of every vulnerable adult who is homeless and dies, but will continue to work with other Government departments to deliver the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

HOME OFFICE

■ Action Fraud: Finance

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[290747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what due diligence her Department has taken to ensure that the funding provided for the Action Fraud contact meets the demand of the service.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office keeps the funding requirements for the Action Fraud service under regular review to ensure that resources can meet the demand from victims. However, the Home Office remains committed to improving the law enforcement response to fraud. That is why we requested that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire

and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) conduct a thematic inspection on fraud to ensure our response is meeting the needs of fraud victims

The City of London Police (as the National Lead Force for fraud) is currently implementing recommendations within HMICFRS' inspection report, which was published on 2nd April.

The Home Office will monitor delivery of HMICFRS' recommendations through its Economic Crime Delivery Board (chaired by the Permanent Secretaries of the Home Office and HMT) and Economic Crime Strategic Board (chaired by the Home Secretary and the Chancellor).

■ Asylum: Families

Catherine McKinnell:

[290767]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made toward securing the future of family reunion routes in negotiations with the EU; and whether the UK will continue to apply the Dublin III Regulation if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Brandon Lewis:

If the UK leaves the EU with a deal we will continue to participate in the Dublin III Regulation, under which unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU currently reunite with family members in other EU Member States, during the implementation period.

The UK would cease participating in the Dublin III Regulation immediately if we were to leave the EU without a deal. However, the Immigration, Nationality and Asylum (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 makes a 'saving' such that any Dublin family reunion cases which have entered the system prior to exit day will continue to be processed in a no deal situation.

We want a close future partnership to tackle the shared challenges on asylum and illegal migration. Section 17 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 commits the Government to seek to negotiate an agreement with the EU which allows for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU to join family members lawfully present in the UK, where it is in their best interests. This commitment stands whether we leave the EU with or without a deal. Effecting transfers relies on an agreement being in place and we endeavour to negotiate such an agreement as soon as possible.

In either a deal or no deal scenario, children will still be able to apply to join family members in the UK who benefit from international protection under the UK's refugee family reunion provisions under the Immigration Rules.

Afzal Khan:

[293719]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the ability of refugees and people seeking asylum to reunite with family

members in the UK under the Dublin III Regulation will be safeguarded in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

Afzal Khan:

[\[293720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to protect the rights of families to reunite under the Dublin Regulation in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

Afzal Khan:

[\[293721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on families who are eligible to be reunited under the provisions of the Dublin III Regulation.

Brandon Lewis:

In a no-deal scenario, the UK would immediately cease participating in the Dublin III Regulation. However, under the Immigration, Nationality and Asylum (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 there is a 'savings' provision, where any Dublin family reunion cases, which have entered the system prior to exit day, will continue to be processed. The UK is also committed, under section 17 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, to seek to negotiate an agreement with the EU which allows for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the EU to join family members lawfully present in the UK, where it is in their best interests. This commitment stands whether we leave the EU with or without a deal.

The UK provides a safe and legal route to bring families of refugees together through its refugee family reunion policy. This allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. This route will not be affected by EU Exit.

Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules provides for family members wishing to enter or remain in the UK on the basis of their relationship with a family member who is a British citizen or settled in the UK, and those who are post-flight family of a person granted protection in the UK. This route will also not be affected by EU Exit.

■ Entry Clearances: Holidays Abroad

Janet Daby:

[\[291033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to make sure people returning from holidays will not be affected by increased checks at border posts in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Brandon Lewis:

Immediately after exit, EU citizens can continue to cross the border using their passport or national identity card. They will be able to use e-Gates if they are travelling on a biometric passport, and they will not be routinely questioned about their status in the UK.

During 2020, the UK will phase out the use of EEA national identity cards. We will make an announcement on when this will happen and will give notice so that EU

citizens and carriers can prepare. Swiss national identity cards will continue to be valid for travel in line with the citizens' rights agreement between the UK and Switzerland.

■ Home Office: Written Questions

Mr Steve Reed: [293600]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to Question 290346 on Immigration: Windrush Generation, tabled by the hon. Member for Croydon North on 24 September 2019.

Seema Kennedy:

The response to UIN 290346 was answered on the 7th October 2019.

■ Immigration: Appeals

Mr Jonathan Lord: [293550]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the (a) target and (b) average time taken is between the completion of an immigration tribunal and the implementation of that tribunal's decision.

Seema Kennedy:

Where the appeal has been allowed in favour of the appellant, the Home Office undertakes careful consideration of the judge's determination in order to conclude whether to submit an application for permission to appeal within the time limits set by the Tribunal Procedure Committee.

Information on the average length of time taken to implement allowed appeals that we do not challenge is not readily available in a reliable format and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost through the examination of individual case files.

Statistics on appeals that have been determined by HM Courts and Tribunals Service are published quarterly. The most recent edition (Tribunals and gender recognitions certificates statistics quarterly: October to December 2018) is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2019>

■ Immigration: Armed Forces

Steve McCabe: [293442]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to waive immigration application fees for members of the armed forces and their families.

Seema Kennedy:

The Home Office is listening carefully to those with concerns about how members of HM Forces can have the support of their families whilst serving our country.

We are continuing to discuss the impact of immigration fees on members of the HM Forces with MOD.

■ Immigration: British Nationals (Overseas)

Emma Reynolds: [\[292899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing British National (Overseas) passport holders to live and work in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Seema Kennedy:

The UK continues to support the one country, two systems model underpinned by the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The immigration status of BN(O)s is part of this agreement; there is no right to work or live in the UK under the BN(O) passport.

I refer the Hon Lady to the answers given by my Rt. Hon Friend, the Foreign Secretary, when responding to an urgent question on 26 September 2019.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield: [\[290878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government guidance entitled How your personal information is used within the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship System, if she will publish the memoranda of understanding between her Department and authorities and organisations outside the EEA on data sharing for settled status applications.

Paul Blomfield: [\[290879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Government guidance entitled EU Settlement Scheme: how we use your personal information, if she will publish a list of organisations with whom the Government has shared the personal information of EU Settlement Scheme applicants.

Paul Blomfield: [\[290880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the sharing of personal information of an EU Settlement Scheme applicant with an external organisation, if she will publish the criteria by which her Department judges whether an external organisation has taken sufficient steps to protect personal information shared with them.

Paul Blomfield: [\[290881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish data sharing agreements with external organisations relating to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Paul Blomfield: [\[290882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 May 2019 to Question 254812 on Immigration: EU Nationals, what the criteria and process is that her Department uses to determine whether staff require access to data in

order to carry out their duties; and who in her Department is responsible for making that decision in each case.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office is the data controller for all data processed within the EU Settlement Scheme, this includes where organisations are contracted to act on behalf of the Home Office.

No other organisations have access to the personal information of applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme.

The Home Office may share information with an organisation an applicant has cited within their own application. This is to verify the evidence and protect against fraud and the use of counterfeit documents. Further details are set out in the following guidance and privacy information notice:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-how-we-use-your-personal-information>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-information-use-in-borders-immigration-and-citizenship>.

The Home Office takes its data security and data protection obligations extremely seriously. There are processes in place in the Home Office for the capturing and mitigation of risks and vulnerabilities to ensure appropriate control of our services. I can confirm this is the case for the EU Settlement Scheme.

Our staff are security cleared and data will only be accessed by those who have a valid business reason to access it. The Home Office regularly monitors the systems for abuse and misuse.

Paul Farrelly:

[291006]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of children of EU nationals living in the UK eligible for British citizenship.

Seema Kennedy:

The specific information requested is not available.

Since 1983 a child born in the UK will only be a British citizen if either parent is a British citizen or settled in the UK. For those born in the UK and overseas that do not acquire citizenship automatically at birth, there are registration provisions. Eligibility for each is largely determined by assessing the parents' status on a case by case basis. This information is not captured in birth records.

Jo Stevens:

[291012]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the reciprocal effect on UK citizens living in the EU of measures to tighten the migration to the UK of EU citizens in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

Brandon Lewis:

The Government values the significant contribution that EU citizens make to our public services and our communities, and we want them to stay. The Prime Minister has given an unequivocal guarantee that they will have the absolute certainty of the continued right to live and remain in the UK after Brexit.

That certainty is being delivered by the EU Settlement Scheme, and nearly 1.5 million people have already been granted status under the scheme. That status will enable EU citizens and their family members to secure their rights in UK law, with the same rights to work and access benefits and services as they have now. The scheme will cover all EU citizens living in the UK before Brexit on 31 October, and their family members, and they will have until at least 31 December 2020 to apply.

Freedom of movement as it currently stands under EU law will be brought to an end when we leave the EU on 31 October. From January 2021, we will introduce a new points-based immigration system. This will prioritise the skills and contributions people can make to the UK, rather than where they come from. In a no deal scenario, there will be a transitional period before the new immigration system commences in 2021. We have announced details of the temporary immigration arrangements that will operate during this period and they are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-deal-immigration-arrangements-for-eu-citizens-moving-to-the-uk-after-brexite>

Law-abiding EU citizens moving to the UK after a no deal Brexit will still be able to live and work in the UK for a temporary period, but we will make it harder for serious criminals to enter the UK. Those new arrivals who wish to stay beyond the end of 2020 will need to apply for a UK immigration status. The Home Office will open a new immigration scheme – the European Temporary Leave to Remain Scheme to provide a route to apply for this status. The online application process will be simple and free of charge. Subject to identity, security and criminality checks, successful applicants will be granted 36 months' leave to remain in the UK. This will provide them with a bridge into the new immigration system from 2021.

The Government looks forward to seeing the EU27 set out such clear and generous arrangements for UK nationals living in the EU.

Paul Farrelly:**[291281]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support homeless migrants from the EU apply for settled status.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office has put in place measures to ensure that the settlement scheme is accessible and capable of handling vulnerable customers, including homeless applicants, with flexibility.

A user group of external stakeholders who represent the needs of potentially vulnerable individuals, including those who are homeless, has been established to work with the Home Office to ensure the right support arrangements are in place.

There is provision in policy to ensure effective consideration of evidence of residence, which allows for a wide range of evidence to be provided by applicants in order to evidence their residence.

The Home Office has introduced a range of support including up to £9 million grant funding for 57 voluntary and community organisations, to ensure those that require the most support to apply to the scheme can access it.

Steve Double:

[293633]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average waiting time for decisions on settled status applications; and what plans she has to reduce waiting times for those decisions.

Brandon Lewis:

Applications for settled status are generally completed within 5 working days.

Applications may take longer in instances where further evidence is required, or an application is made via the postal route. In these instances, processing times may vary based on how quickly the information is provided.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[293710]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 291111 on Immigration: EU Nationals, what the average time taken was to answer a call to the EU Settlement Resolution Centre for each of the seven days from 23 September 2019.

Brandon Lewis:

We do not publish data on daily waiting time, however the average time taken to answer a call to the settlement Resolution Centre is reviewed each day to ensure it is kept to a minimum.

David Linden:

[293711]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has published on the application process for indefinite leave to remain for a person has previously been granted discretionary leave to remain.

Seema Kennedy:

The guidance on the application process for indefinite leave to remain for a person who has previously been granted discretionary leave is published on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/settle-in-the-uk/y/you-have-discretionary-leave>.

■ Immigration: Windrush Generation

Mr Steve Reed:

[290346]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has received the final report of the Windrush lessons learned review.

Seema Kennedy:

The Home Secretary has not yet received the final report from Wendy Williams. On receipt, it will be published as soon as practicable.

■ Islamic State: British Nationals Abroad**Nigel Dodds:**[\[291275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her international counterparts on ensuring that UK citizens who were ISIS fighters and are imprisoned in Iraq and Syria cannot evade justice.

Brandon Lewis:

The UK Government is clear that those individuals who have fought for, or supported Daesh, whatever their nationality, should face justice and accountability through prosecution in the most appropriate jurisdiction, which will often be within the region where their offences have been committed.

We welcome international efforts and continue to work closely with international partners to find a sustainable, long-term solution to the complex issue of suspected Daesh terrorists, and in the pursuit of justice of those who have participated in terrorism overseas.

■ Marriage Certificates**Tim Loughton:**[\[290563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proposals she plans to bring forward under the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration Etc.) Act 2019 on the (a) method and (b) timetable for a new married couple to lodge a marriage schedule; and if he will make a statement.

Seema Kennedy:

The detailed processes are under development and will be confirmed when a timescale for implementation is announced.

■ Marriage Certificates: Mothers**Tim Loughton:**[\[290560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timescale is for the new arrangements to register mothers' names on marriage records under the terms of the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration Etc.) Act 2019 to come into effect.

Seema Kennedy:

The General Register Office (GRO) is currently working on the secondary legislation, IT systems and administrative processes that are required to implement the marriage schedule system. An implementation timescale will be announced in due course.

■ Migrant Workers: Pay**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[290918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will reconsider the £30,000 salary threshold for immigrant workers.

Seema Kennedy:

On 24 June 2019, the Government asked the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to consider the operation of salary thresholds in the future immigration system, including the impact of exemptions from minimum salary thresholds.

The MAC is due to report by January 2020.

■ Migrant Workers: Speech and Language Therapy**Geraint Davies:** [\[293421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to accept the recommendation made by the Migration Advisory Committee in its report entitled Full review of the Shortage Occupation List, published in May 2019, that the entire occupation of speech and language therapists be added to the Shortage Occupation List.

Seema Kennedy:

The previous Home Secretary announced in his Written Ministerial Statement of 23 July that the Government was accepting the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations on the composition of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL).

Changes to the Immigration Rules implementing these recommendations, were laid on 9 September and will come into effect from 6 October. This includes adding speech and language therapists to the SOL.

■ Omar Barghouti**Richard Burden:** [\[292826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason there was a delay in Omar Barghouti being informed of the approval of his visa to travel to the UK from the Occupied Palestinian Territories in September 2019 after that visa was approved.

Seema Kennedy:

We do not routinely comment on individual cases.

Our service standard is to decide straightforward applications within 15 working days, although more complex cases take longer.

We routinely contact customers once it becomes apparent that we may not be able to resolve their application within the service standard.

■ Sikhs

Preet Kaur Gill:

[291051]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the (a) research and (b) reports that her Department has commissioned and requested on (i) the Sikh community and (ii) Sikh groups and organisations in each of the last three years.

Brandon Lewis:

The Counter-Extremism Strategy published in 2015 covers all forms of extremism and a key part of that strategy is about building our understanding wider extremism issues, including those affecting the Sikh community.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy>.

Such research cannot routinely be published for security reasons and to ensure we can continue effectively to tackle these forms of extremism.

■ Veterans: Hong Kong

Tommy Sheppard:

[292939]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2019 to Question 272140 on Right of Abode: Veterans, when her Department plans to make a decision on whether to grant right of abode to former British-Hong Kong servicemen.

Seema Kennedy:

Under the British Nationality Selection Scheme, that was introduced in 1990 and ran until 1 July 1997, a limited number of Hong Kong Military Service Corps personnel who were settled in Hong Kong could apply to register as a British citizen.

We are giving careful consideration to representations made on behalf of those former Hong Kong Military Service Corps personnel who were unable to obtain citizenship through the selection scheme.

■ VFS Global: Complaints

Alistair Burt:

[290792]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many complaints her Department has received about VSF Global each year since the start of its contract with her Department in 2013.

Seema Kennedy:

The performance against service standard in relation to customer complaints relating to UKVI can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-august-2019>. We do not publish statistics on complaints received in relation to individual supplier performance

VFS Global: Contracts**Alistair Burt:** [290786]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2019 to Question 268421, if she will publish details of the Service Levels relating to the Next Generation Visa (NGOV) Services contract delivered by VFS Global.

Seema Kennedy:

In line with the Government's commitment to transparency, the Home Office has published the VFS Global Next Generation Visa (NGOV) contract schedules on Contracts Finder (part of gov.uk).

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/2c8f6f38-6f15-46ec-9954-c8571b0f1c05?p=@FQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08=U>

The Service Levels can be found in Schedule 7 of the contract. These Service Levels set out the criteria Home Office uses to assess the performance of VFS Global in handling visa and settlement applications

Alistair Burt: [290787]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had on whether to extend the contract for Next Generation Visa (NGOV) Services delivered by VFS Global beyond the current expiration date of 31 March 2021.

Seema Kennedy:

The Home Department are currently in discussion with the suppliers who deliver the Next Generation Outsourced Visa (NGOV) contract to review proposals for an extension beyond 2021 but no recommendations have yet been made.

Visas: Africa**Patrick Grady:** [292938]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a response to EDM 2723 on Joint All Party Parliamentary Group Report on Visa Problems for African visitors to the UK.

Seema Kennedy:

The then Immigration Minister attended the launch of the report and agreed to respond to the APPG. A response is being prepared by officials and will be sent in due course.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**Parliamentary Estate****Paul Farrelly:** [292136]

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, when responsibility for Bridge Street subway was transferred to the Parliamentary Estate; and what steps the Commission took to inform Members.

Tom Brake:

Responsibility for the Bridge Street underpass was transferred to Parliament in May 2019. This followed its temporary closure to the public for health and safety reasons, in order to allow work to take place on the Elizabeth Tower renovation project.

Members were advised of the changes to the management of the area via an email from the House of Commons Communications Team (part of a wider "Pre-Recess update for Members" message) on 22 May 2019. A news item was added to the intranet on the same day. A further update was added on 8 August 2019.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing and Social Rented Housing****Helen Hayes:****[291593]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to increase the provision of (a) affordable housing and (b) social housing in (i) London and (ii) England.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 2 October 2019]: The government is committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9 billion available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes of a wide range of tenures, including social rent. £4.8 billion of this will be for London, to deliver 116,000 new affordable homes.

Since 2010 we have delivered 430,000 affordable homes, including 134,000 homes for social rent. A quarter of this delivery was in London, where we have build 88,500 affordable homes.

The government has brought social housing waiting lists down by over half a million since 2010. We have also given councils the tools to deliver a new generation of council housing by removing the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap, so they can deliver the homes their communities need, and we expect to see net increases in social housing stock in the years to come.

On 18 September 2018 we announced an additional £2 billion of long term funding certainty for housing associations. This extra funding will deliver more affordable homes and stimulate the sector's wider building ambitions, through strategic partnerships.

On 27 June 2019, we opened bidding on £1 billion of this funding through Homes England. We are working closely with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to open bidding on £1 billion for London as soon as possible. Our ten year funding commitment through strategic partnerships marks the first time any government has invested such long-term funding in new homes through housing associations.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[291581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's data release entitled, Building Safety Programme: Monthly Data Release for August 2019, what steps his Department is taking to confirm the cladding status of the four private sector residential buildings for which such status is still to be confirmed.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 2 October 2019]: Buildings with an unknown status are those buildings where we are awaiting verification that they have unsafe Aluminium Composite Material cladding. We are working with the relevant local authorities - London Borough of Brent, London Borough of Harrow and Liverpool City Council - who identified the four buildings and are waiting for the outcome of their investigations to verify the types of cladding present.

■ European Social Fund

Tom Brake:

[\[293414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the third sector on the development of a replacement programme for European social funding.

Jake Berry:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will replace the European Social Fund after we leave the EU, which was committed in the 2017 manifesto.

My Department has held 25 events in all four nations of the Union. We have met over 500 beneficiaries and interested parties, including from the third sector, to discuss their expectations for the new fund.

Their views will inform decisions about its design and priorities, which will be taken at the spending review.

We also be consulting widely in due course.

■ Future High Streets Fund: Leigh

Jo Platt:

[\[293000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the methodology of the award process for the Future High Streets Fund; and what score bids within Leigh constituency received.

Jake Berry:

High streets have a crucial role to play as we work to grow the economy of all parts of the country. Our £1 billion Future High Streets Fund is key to delivering this, empowering local leaders to help transform their high streets and town centres as

consumer habits change, by investing in housing, workplaces, infrastructure and culture.

All expressions of interest to the Future High Streets Fund were individually assessed in line with the guidance and information published in our Prospectus and Supplementary Guidance, where we also outlined the criteria for the Fund as well as the weighting for the expression of interest questions. Both the Prospectus and Supplementary Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>.

As the Future High Streets Fund is still a live and open competitive process it would not be appropriate for the Department to publish individual scores, as these are commercially sensitive.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[291579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's consultation entitled, Building a safer future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system, whether he plans to lower the threshold at which combustible materials are banned for use on new high-rise residential buildings from 18 metres to 11 metres.

Mr Steve Reed:

[\[291580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's consultation entitled, Building a safer future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulatory system, whether he plans to undertake a consultation on banning the use of combustible materials on the external walls of (a) hospitals, (b) care homes and (c) sheltered housing.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 2 October 2019]: I refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN 291436 answered on 1 October.

■ Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[290653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the names the external agencies providing services for the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre for a) PR and engagement, b) public affairs and c) planning services; and how much is being paid from the public purse to each agency.

Jake Berry:

The organisations and amounts paid are set out below:

ORGANISATION	SERVICE	SPEND TO DATE FROM PUBLIC PURSE INCLUDING VAT
Big Ideas Community Interest Company	Community engagement	£69,296
Dp9	Planning services	£0
Four Communications	Communications	£70,748
Newgate Communications	Communications	£0

■ Homelessness

Chris Ruane:

[292842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the accuracy of (a) homelessness and (b) rough sleeping statistics.

Luke Hall:

MHCLG publishes statistics on statutory homelessness and rough sleeping.

a) From the 1 April 2018, the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data system replaced the aggregated data return (collected using the P1E form) for all new homelessness applications. The statistics measure statutory homelessness and excludes anyone who has not approached their local authority for assistance who would otherwise be considered homeless. The data from H-CLIC provides much more detailed, case-level information on the characteristics households experiencing homelessness and associated factors.

These statistics are designated as experimental statistics as they are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed. Work continues to develop processes for handling gaps in coverage and improve data quality until the statistics are of sufficient quality to be designated as National Statistics. More detail on these issues and how these have been dealt with are covered in the Technical report published alongside the statistical release available at this link.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831153/Statutory_Homelessness_Technical_Note.pdf

b) Since 2010 all local authorities in England have been required to provide a snapshot of rough sleeping using either a count or an evidence-based estimate.

We are confident these Rough Sleeping Statistics provide a pragmatic way of estimating the number of people sleeping rough across England on a single night and of assessing change over time. The data is collated by outreach workers, local charities and community groups and is independently verified by Homeless Link. Accurately counting or estimating the number of people sleeping rough is inherently difficult given the hidden nature of rough sleeping. More detail about data quality and

limitations of the latest Rough Sleeping Snapshot Statistics can be found in the technical information section of the latest statistical release available at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2018>

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) have previously raised concerns about the reliability of the rough sleeping snapshot statistics due to a number of areas changing their approach for measuring rough sleeping. The recently published Rough Sleeping Initiative Impact evaluation looked at this concern and found there was no evidence that areas changing from estimates to counts and vice versa was responsible for the fall in rough sleeping in areas funded by the initiative. More information is available at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-initiative-2018-impact-evaluation>

We also have a programme of work underway to improve the broader evidence base for homelessness and rough sleeping. Further information about this work is available at this link:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-research-programme.pdf>

Sandy Martin:

[294239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department will take steps to ensure that people who present as homeless to a local authority are found accommodation in that local authority area.

Luke Hall:

We are clear that local authorities should, as far as possible, avoid placing households out of their borough. However, in some areas where there is a limited supply of suitable accommodation, we are aware that it is sometimes necessary to place households in accommodation outside of the local area. This is set out in legislation and guidance which local authorities must have regard to.

The guidance is clear that where possible the authority should seek to retain established links with schools, doctors, social workers and other key services and support.

If a local authority places a household into accommodation in another local area, they are required by law to notify the local authority of any placement, to minimise disruption to schooling, healthcare and other support. In July the previous Homelessness Minister, Heather Wheeler MP, wrote to all local authorities to remind them of the need to send notifications when placing families out of their area.

■ Homelessness: Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs

Helen Hayes:

[\[293671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to improve drug and alcohol support for homeless people and rough sleepers.

Luke Hall:

The government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022, before ending it altogether and has now committed over £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the spending review period to April 2020.

Whilst we recognise that suitable housing is a key part of the solution, health services have a significant role to play, alongside other public services. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure that rough sleepers have the health care they need, when the need it. This includes several commitments that were made in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, such as:

- rapid audit of health service provision to rough sleepers, including mental health and substance misuse treatment;
- providing up to £2 million in health funding to test models of community-based provision designed to enable access to health and support services for people who are sleeping rough;
- new training for front-line workers to help them support rough sleepers under the influence of New Psychoactive Substances such as spice, and;
- working with the Home Office to ensure rough sleepers are considered in the forthcoming Alcohol Strategy, which will focus on vulnerable people.

We are continuing to work with colleagues in the DHSC, Public Health England and the Home Office on this issue, including through the forthcoming independent review of drugs policy, led by Professor Dame Carol Black.

At the start of September, the Chancellor announced the Spending Round outcome for the next financial year (2020/21). MHCLG secured £422 million funding for homelessness in 2020/21, an increase of £54 million. The Chancellor also announced an increase in the level of funding for the public health grant to bring it back up to the same level as last year. This means local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential front-line health services.

■ Homelessness: Death

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[292827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government taking to reduce the number of homeless people that die while living on the street.

Luke Hall:

The government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022, before ending it altogether and has now committed over £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the spending review period to April 2020.

In the recent Spending Round we announced £422 million funding for homelessness in 2020/21, an increase of £54 million.

The government changed the law and the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), which is the most ambitious legislation in this area in decades, came into force this April. The HRA requires councils to provide early support for those at risk of having nowhere left to go. The government is also boosting access to affordable housing, and making renting more secure.

We also recognise the challenges that the cold weather poses for those who are sleeping rough. On 12 September 2019, we launched a second year of the Cold Weather Fund. This £10 million fund will be available to all local authorities in England to provide a robust, local response to support as many rough sleepers as possible off the streets during the winter period. This is double the funding made available last winter. Local authorities will be able to access this funding until March 2020.

Whilst we recognise that suitable housing is a key part of the solution, health services have a significant role to play, alongside other public services. MHCLG is working with the DHSC to ensure that rough sleepers have the health care they need, when the need it. This includes several commitments that were made in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, such as:

- committing £30 million for mental health services from NHS England for rough sleeping over the next five years
- providing up to £2 million in health funding to test models of community-based provision designed to enable access to health and support services for people who are sleeping rough.
- working with Safeguarding Adult Boards to ensure that Safeguarding Adult Reviews where appropriate. Lessons learned from these reviews will inform improvements in local systems and services.

Professor Dame Carol Black has been appointed to carry out a major review of drug misuse. The review, which is building on existing government strategies to combat drugs, serious violence and serious and organised crime, is examining the harms that drugs cause and the best ways to prevent drug-taking.

Mr Jim Cunningham:**[292828]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that the trend in the level of deaths of homeless people is investigated.

Luke Hall:

The government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022, before ending it altogether and has now committed over £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the spending review period to April 2020.

In the recent Spending Round we announced £422 million funding for homelessness in 2020/21, an increase of £54 million.

Whilst we recognise that suitable housing is a key part of the solution, health services have a significant role to play, alongside other public services. The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure that rough sleepers have the health care they need, when the need it. These commitments include:

- working with Safeguarding Adult Boards to ensure that Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR) happen where appropriate. Lessons learned from these reviews will inform improvements in local systems and services.
- the DHSC has commissioned King's College London to conduct a thematic review of the national SAR library on rough sleeping cases. Findings have recently been published and are being disseminated
- the DHSC has funded the Local Government Association (LGA) to deliver four national events in autumn 2019/20 to look at safeguarding and homelessness.
- committing £30 million for mental health services from NHS England for rough sleeping over the next five years
- providing up to £2 million in health funding to test models of community-based provision designed to enable access to health and support services for people who are sleeping rough.

Professor Dame Carol Black has been appointed to carry out a major review of drug misuse. The review, which is building on existing government strategies to combat drugs, serious violence and serious and organised crime, is examining the harms that drugs cause and the best ways to prevent drug-taking.

Helen Hayes:**[293669]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Office for National Statistics report showing a 22 per cent rise in the deaths of homeless people in 2018, what plans his Department has to prevent the deaths of homeless people and rough sleepers.

Luke Hall:

The government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022, before ending it altogether and has now committed over £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the spending review period to April 2020.

In the recent Spending Round, we announced £422 million funding for homelessness in 2020/21, an increase of £54 million.

The government changed the law and the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), which is the most ambitious legislation in this area in decades, came into force on 3 April 2018. The HRA requires councils to provide early support for those at risk of having nowhere left to go. The government is also boosting access to affordable housing and making renting more secure.

We also recognise the challenges that the cold weather poses for those who are sleeping rough. On 12 September 2019, we launched a second year of the Cold Weather Fund. This £10 million fund will be available to all local authorities in England to provide a robust, local response to support as many rough sleepers as possible off the streets during the winter period. This is double the funding made available last winter. Local authorities will be able to access this funding until March 2020.

Whilst we recognise that suitable housing is a key part of the solution, health services have a significant role to play, alongside other public services. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government is working with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure that rough sleepers have the health care they need, when they need it. This includes several commitments that were made in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, such as:

- rapid audit of health service provision to rough sleepers, including mental health and substance misuse treatment ;
- committing £30 million for mental health services from NHS England for rough sleeping over the next five years ;
- providing up to £2 million in health funding to test models of community-based provision designed to enable access to health and support services for people who are sleeping rough, and;
- working with Safeguarding Adult Boards to ensure that Safeguarding Adult Reviews happen where appropriate. Lessons learned from these reviews will inform improvements in local systems and services.

Professor Dame Carol Black has been appointed to carry out a major review of drug misuse. The review, which is building on existing government strategies to combat drugs, serious violence and serious and organised crime, is examining the harms that drugs cause and the best ways to prevent drug-taking.

Helen Hayes:

[293670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of homeless deaths in 2018 attributable to substance misuse; and what representations his Department has made to the Department of Health and Social Care on drug and alcohol support for homeless people and rough sleepers.

Luke Hall:

It should not happen that people die prematurely because they are homeless.

The recent ONS statistics emphasise the devastating impact of substance and alcohol misuse. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure that rough sleepers have the health care they need, when they need it. This includes several commitments that were made in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, such as:

- rapid audit of health service provision to rough sleepers, including mental health and substance misuse treatment ;
- £2 million to test community-based models of access to health services for rough sleepers, including mental health and substance misuse services ;
- new training for front-line workers to help them support rough sleepers under the influence of New Psychoactive Substances such as spice, and;
- working with the Home Office to ensure rough sleepers are considered in the forthcoming Alcohol Strategy, which will focus on vulnerable people .

My Department will continue to work with colleagues in the DHSC, Public Health England and the Home Office, including through the forthcoming independent review of drugs policy. Professor Dame Carol Black has been appointed to carry out this major review of drug misuse. The review, which is building on existing government strategies to combat drugs, serious violence and serious and organised crime, is examining the harms that drugs cause and the best ways to prevent drug-taking.

■ Homelessness: Health Services**Helen Hayes:**[\[293672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of healthcare provision for homeless people and rough sleepers.

Luke Hall:

The government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022, before ending it altogether and has now committed over £1.2 billion to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the spending review period to April 2020.

Whilst we recognise that suitable housing is a key part of the solution, health services have a significant role to play, alongside other public services. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure that rough sleepers have the health care they need, when the need it. This includes several commitments that were made in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, such as:

- rapid audit of health service provision to rough sleepers, including mental health and substance misuse treatment;

- providing up to £2 million in health funding to test models of community-based provision designed to enable access to health and support services for people who are sleeping rough;
- new training for front-line workers to help them support rough sleepers under the influence of New Psychoactive Substances such as spice, and;
- working with the Home Office to ensure rough sleepers are considered in the forthcoming Alcohol Strategy, which will focus on vulnerable people.

We are continuing to work with colleagues in the DHSC, Public Health England and the Home Office on this issue, including through the forthcoming independent review of drugs policy, led by Professor Dame Carol Black.

At the start of September, the Chancellor announced the Spending Round outcome for the next financial year (2020/21). MHCLG secured £422 million funding for homelessness in 2020/21, an increase of £54 million. The Chancellor also announced an increase in the level of funding for the public health grant to bring it back up to the same level as last year. This means local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential front-line health services.

■ Local Government Finance

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[287465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Spending Round 2019, what the planned increase in the (a) grant to and (b) spending power of local councils for the next financial year will be in (a) real and (b) cash terms; and what estimate he has made of the increase in council tax required to achieve the spending power increase.

Luke Hall:

The government recently announced the largest year-on-year real terms increase in spending power for local government in almost a decade. Core Spending Power is expected to rise by £2.9 billion from £46.2 billion to £49.1 billion in 2020-21, a cash increase of 6.3 per cent and an estimated real terms increase of 4.3 per cent.

This includes an additional £1 billion grant for adult and children's social care, on top of the continuation of existing social care grants. Subject to consultation and the House of Commons approving council tax referendum principles, councils will have access to an additional £1.6 billion through council tax, as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, based on a 2 per cent core referendum principle and a 2 per cent adult social care precept.

■ London Port Health Authority: Finance**Mark Field:**[\[291551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government's announcement of 21 August 2019 that ports and local areas will receive £9 million of funding to prepare for the UK leaving the EU, how much funding will be allocated to the London Port Health Authority.

Luke Hall:

Across 2017/18 and 2018/19, my Department has made available £77 million to help local areas prepare for Brexit. This includes £60 million that has been distributed between all local authorities in England, including £314,952 to the City of London, and £3.14 million that was allocated to nineteen councils in March 2019 to increase capacity to plan for and accommodate changes in and around ports of entry. In August 2019 £5.01 million was announced to further support councils which either have, or are near to, a major air, land or sea port to ensure they continue to operate efficiently (£2.61 million to councils in Kent and £2.4 million to councils outside of Kent), and £4 million was allocated to Local Resilience Forums to support them with their core administration costs for preparing, testing, assuring and delivering plans for supporting the delivery of Brexit. This funding is for councils and Local Resilience Forums to boost their capacity and help them put in place measures that will protect the services that residents, communities and businesses rely upon.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Energy Supply**Nic Dakin:**[\[291003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which provider supplies energy to his Department; how much CO₂ was emitted through his Department's energy consumption in the latest period for which figures are available; whether the criteria his Department uses to select an energy supplier includes how environmentally friendly the supplier is; and what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce CO₂ emissions from its energy use.

Jake Berry:

The Department is mandated to use the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Energy frameworks for the supply of gas, electricity and liquid fuels. The CCS competes the frameworks on the open market and the criteria used to select energy suppliers is set by Crown Commercial Services. The current suppliers of each of these services are as follow:

- EDF (Half-Hourly electricity);
- British Gas (Non Half-Hourly electricity);
- Corona (gas); and
- various suppliers (liquid fuels).

In 2018/19, the Department emitted 5,241 t/CO₂e through its energy use which represents a 70 per cent reduction compared to 2009/10. This has been achieved

largely through improved building management (primarily relating to heating and cooling), adopting more resource efficient behaviours, more efficient use of space, and co-location.

■ Planning: Public Consultation

Jack Lopresti:

[\[290793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has for speeding up the planning process for large developments whilst ensuring adequate consultation with affected local residents.

Esther McVey:

At Spring Statement, government announced that MHCLG will be publishing an Accelerated Planning Green Paper. The Green Paper will look at how greater capacity and capability within local planning authorities, better performance management and procedural improvements can accelerate the end-to-end planning process for all, while protecting and strengthening the role that communities play in new development that comes forward. The Green Paper will be published later this year.

■ Private Rented Housing

Jo Stevens:

[\[291014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 11 July 2019 to Question 274566 on Private Rented Housing, what steps his Department is taking to discourage landlords from refusing tenants on (a) housing benefit and (b) universal credit.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 30 September 2019]: As the single largest payer of rents in the country, the government wants to ensure that prospective tenants who receive housing support are not dismissed out of hand. That is why the government has committed to tackling the issue of private letting advertisements that specify 'No DSS' tenants.

In June, the government met industry representatives at No.10 Downing Street, including mortgage providers, insurance representatives, landlord associations, tenant groups, and property websites to determine what action could be taken.

I'm pleased to say that at the meeting, Metro Bank pledged to remove 'No DSS' conditions from their mortgage products. In August, The Mortgage Lender also announced that they were lifting 'No DSS' restrictions. These changes build on commitments from NatWest and Nationwide and evidence now suggests that nearly all new buy-to-let mortgages have no restrictions on letting tenants in receipt of benefits.

Since the ministerial roundtable at No. 10 Downing Street in June, the government has continued to work with landlords', letting agencies', lenders', insurance providers', and tenants' representatives to explore the scope for joint communications

to discourage the practice of preventing benefit claimants from applying for private rental sector lettings.

■ **Refuges: Females**

Ian Lavery:

[293588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to fund women's refuges.

Luke Hall:

Since 2014 the Department has invested £55.5 million in services to support victims of domestic abuse, including refuges.

MHCLG recently consulted on a new statutory duty which would require local authorities to assess the need for and commission support for victims and their children in safe accommodation.

The consultation closed on 2 August. We have analysed the responses to the consultation on support within safe accommodation and will be publishing a full government response in due course.

■ **Social Rented Housing: Domestic Abuse**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[293449]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Minister for Women and Equalities on the barriers survivors of domestic abuse face when trying to access local authority housing.

Luke Hall:

Officials from my Department hold regular discussions with counterparts in the Government Equalities Office on a range of issues, including on tackling domestic abuse.

In November 2018 we issued new statutory guidance for local authorities to improve access to social housing by victims of domestic abuse who are in a refuge or other form of safe temporary accommodation:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/753667/Improving_access_to_social_housing_for_victims_of_domestic_abuse.pdf

The guidance makes clear that local authorities are expected not to apply residency tests for those victims who have fled to another district, sets out how they can give appropriate priority to victims, and encourages them to use their existing powers to support victims to remain safely in their homes if they choose to do so.

The Domestic Abuse Bill includes provisions to ensure that, where local authorities grant a new tenancy to a victim of domestic abuse who has or had a lifetime tenancy, the new tenancy must be a further lifetime tenancy.

■ Social Services: Finance

Melanie Onn:

[\[292946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he is consulting on permitting a further two per cent increase to local authority precepts in order to fund social care.

Luke Hall:

My Department has now published the Local Government Finance Settlement technical consultation, which includes a proposal for an adult social care precept for local authorities with responsibility for adult social care of 2 per cent on top of the core council tax referendum principle. The consultation can be found on Gov.uk website.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Tom Brake:

[\[293413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for the completion of the consultation on a UK Shared Prosperity fund; and if he will publish a response to that consultation.

Tom Brake:

[\[293415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what formula the Government plans to use to calculate the level of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocated to each UK region.

Tom Brake:

[\[293416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when officials in his Department last met with representatives of the devolved Administrations on the development of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Jake Berry:

The government recognises the importance of providing certainty and clarity on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. As announced by the Prime Minister on 27 July, the government will bring forward plans on the fund. The government remains committed to consulting on the fund.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will operate across the UK. It will be part of this government's commitment to levelling up our regions and enabling all places to benefit from economic prosperity, particularly those whose economies are furthest behind.

The government has been working closely with interested parties across the UK whilst developing the fund. It is only right that we take final decisions regarding its design, including its allocation, after a cross-government Spending Review.

UK government officials regularly discuss the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with their counterparts in the devolved administrations and the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The last meeting with representatives from all the devolved administrations was held on 2 October 2019.

■ Welfare Assistance Schemes

Steve McCabe: [293441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information his Department holds on the amount of money people have received out of local welfare assistance schemes in each local authority area since 2013.

Luke Hall:

Since 2015-16 Local Welfare Provision funding has been rolled into Revenue Support Grant. This decision was made to further simplify and decentralise funding, because local authorities know better how to make good local decisions to help vulnerable people

The Ministry does not give local authorities specific direction about what to spend revenue support grant on. Local authorities are open to spend non ringfenced funding as they see fit to meet local priorities, and are accountable to their local electorate for their spending. However, we do publish data on total expenditure on Local Welfare Assistance Schemes by each local authority, which is available through the link below in each year to 2017/18.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Department for International Development: Travel

Ruth Jones: [292411]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2017.

Ruth Jones: [292421]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2018.

Zac Goldsmith:

Information on ministerial travel is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the Department for International Development publishes data on ministerial overseas travel on a quarterly basis in arrears at the following link: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/8167ded1-0d4c-41ee-afd7-a6b39f2d1205/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-department-for-international-development>

We do not routinely publish any national travel costs for Ministers.

■ Yemen: Third Sector

Stephen Twigg:

[293424]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support his Department is providing to Yemeni-led civil society organisations.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

In order to protect key institutions and build national capacity in Yemen, the UK is supporting the Yemen Social Fund for Development, a national institution established in 1997. It works across the country to deliver development outcomes such as public employment programmes, access to water and sanitation, and local capacity building through a community-led approach.

DFID is providing £34.48 million to the Fund over three years (2018-2021), including £11.48 million this financial year. This support will provide hundreds of thousands of Yemenis with work opportunities through cash for work schemes, train health and education workers, and support local development by supporting small and medium enterprises.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Keith Vaz:

[291540]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the financial value was of arms exports to each member of the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen since 2015.

Graham Stuart:

The Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) about export licences on GOV.UK. These reports contain detailed information on export licences issued, refused or revoked, by destination, including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences. These can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>.

Bespoke reports (e.g. by country, goods type and for specific timeframes) may also be produced by registering on the Strategic Export Controls Reports and Statistics Website at: <https://www.exportcontroldb.trade.gov.uk/sdb2/fox/sdb/SDBHOME>

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

All export licences are issued in strict accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Stephen Twigg:

[\[292798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether any licences have been granted for military equipment where the Saudi National Guard is certified as the end user since the Court of Appeal's judgment of 20 June 2019 on arms sales at risk of being used in Yemen.

Graham Stuart:

Since the Court of Appeal's judgment of 20 June 2019, no licences have been granted for military equipment where the Saudi National Guard is certified as the end user.

■ **Department for International Trade: Energy Supply**

Nic Dakin:

[\[290330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which provider supplies energy to her Department; how much CO₂ was emitted through her Department's energy consumption in the latest period for which figures are available; whether the criteria her Department uses to select an energy supplier includes how environmentally friendly the supplier is; and what recent steps her Department has taken to reduce CO₂ emissions from its energy use.

Conor Burns:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is mandated to use the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Energy frameworks for the supply of gas, electricity and liquid fuels. The CCS competes the frameworks on the open market and selects the energy providers according to a set of award criteria, normally based on price and quality.

The current suppliers of each of these services are as follows:

- EDF (Half-Hourly electricity);
- British Gas (Non Half-Hourly electricity);
- Corona (gas); and
- various suppliers (liquid fuels).

DIT publishes its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in its Annual Report and Accounts. The latest published figures show 712 t/CO₂e from Scope 1 (Direct) and Scope 2 (Energy indirect) emissions and this covers the 12 months to 31 December 18. In the 12 months to 31 March 2019, which is the most up to date information available from DIT's facilities management provider, the equivalent figure is 705 t/CO₂e from energy use. This data relates only to the Department's 3 Whitehall Place and 55 Whitehall buildings and the space it occupies in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's King Charles Street building. It excludes overseas locations and buildings where the Department is a tenant, either in London or in the rest of the UK.

The Department's 3 Whitehall Place office has benefited from investment by previous tenants, the Department of Energy & Climate Change, in energy and carbon saving plant equipment such as a dedicated small IT chiller and LED lighting. Continued reductions in emissions have been achieved through improved building management and decarbonisation of grid electricity.

■ Overseas Trade: Kenya

Jim Shannon:

[\[293584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions he has had with his Kenyan counterpart on increasing trade with that country.

Conor Burns:

The UK enjoys a strong trade and investment relationship with Kenya. In September I discussed bilateral trade with His Excellency Manoah Esipisu the Kenyan High Commissioner to the UK. Ahead of our exit from the EU, the UK intends to maintain duty-free, quota-free access for Kenya's exports to the UK market.

■ Trade Agreements: Animal Welfare

Paul Farrelly:

[\[293482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government plans for all future trade agreements to be conditional upon animal welfare requirements.

Conor Burns:

Any future trade deals must work for UK consumers, farmers and food manufacturers. The Government shares the British public's high regard for our animal welfare standards and has made clear that we will not compromise on these standards. After EU Exit, the UK will decide how we set and maintain our own standards and regulations. Imports will have to meet all the relevant UK product rules and regulations.

JUSTICE

■ Criminal Injuries Compensation: Children

Sarah Champion:

[\[292917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many victims of child sexual abuse have had an award by the Criminal Injuries and Compensation Scheme withheld because (a) of an unspent conviction, (b) the time limit for application was exceeded, (c) the victim was deemed to have consented and (d) the abuse did not involve physical contact.

Wendy Morton:

The number of victims of sexual abuse who were under 18 at the time of the incident(s) giving rise to their injury and have had an award withheld because of (a) unspent convictions or (b) the time limit being exceeded is provided in the following table:

Year	Total number of resolved child sexual abuse cases	Award withheld due to unspent convictions	Award withheld as time limit exceeded
2015-16	476	26	82
2016-17	2588	46	113
2017-18	5619	140	411
2018-19	4972	111	52

The information provided relates to resolved applications which were submitted from 1 April 2015 onwards, this being the start of the first financial year after the application form for criminal injuries compensation was adapted to capture the incident type. Where an application was rejected for (a) unspent convictions or (b) exceeding the time limit this may not have been the sole reason for rejection. Information about whether the victim was deemed to have consented and whether the abuse did not involve physical contact could only be obtained through a manual search of case records at disproportionate cost.

■ **Debt Collection: Enforcement**

Emma Reynolds:[\[293547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish his Department's response to the call for evidence on bailiff enforcement launched in 2018, entitled Review of the 2014 enforcement agent reforms introduced by the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007.

Chris Philp:

As set out in the Secretary of State for Justice's Written Statement on bailiff reform made on 22 July, we've been continuing to engage with stakeholders before finalising our response. We will respond in full to the call for evidence as soon as possible.

Rachel Reeves:

[\[294141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his timescale is for responding to his Department's Review of enforcement agent (bailiff) reforms: call for evidence, published in November 2018.

Chris Philp:

As set out in the Secretary of State for Justice's Written Statement on bailiff reform made on 22 July, we've been continuing to engage with stakeholders before finalising our response. We will respond in full to the call for evidence as soon as possible.

■ Legal Aid Scheme

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[293450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps his Department has taken to tackle legal advice deserts.

Wendy Morton:

People across England and Wales should be able to access the right legal support in the right way for them and in February the government set out a range of proposals in the Legal Support Action Plan to ensure this remains the case. The Legal Aid Agency frequently reviews market capacity to make sure there is adequate provision around the country and moves quickly to ensure provision where gaps may appear.

Wherever you are in England and Wales legal advice remains available through the Civil Legal Advice telephone line. Additionally, we are investing up to £5m to fund innovative new services, and we have recently published a consultation outlining new proposals for the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme ensuring the sustainability of this vital service for anyone at risk of losing their home

■ Marriage: Humanism

Matt Western:

[\[293698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will bring forward legislative proposals for the recognition of humanist marriages.

Wendy Morton:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given to PQ 284741 on 9 September 2019.

■ Ministry of Justice: Chief Scientific Advisers

Norman Lamb:

[\[292143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many meetings he had with his Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

Chris Philp:

The responsibilities of a Chief Scientific Advisor are performed by the Director of Analysis in the Ministry of Justice. The Director of Analysis has had three meetings with the Secretary of State between 1 June to 31 August 2019.

■ Ministry of Justice: Crispin Odey

David Linden:

[\[292356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish (a) the outcome of all meetings and (b) all call logs between Ministers of his Department and Mr Crispin Odey.

Chris Philp:

The Secretary of State for Justice has had no meetings with Mr Crispin Odey. Details of Ministers' meetings are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK.

■ Ministry of Justice: Ethnic Groups

Chris Stephens:

[\[292943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of staff who applied for promotion within his Department from 1 September 2018 to 1 September 2019 and who identified as (a) BAME and (b) White, were successful by each grade in his Department.

Chris Philp:

The available information relating to the request is provided below and in the attached table.

Number of internal ³ applicants ⁸ known to have applied for promotion ¹ into the Ministry of Justice (excluding HMPPS ²), by ethnicity and grade of post advertised, for recruitment campaigns closed ⁵ between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019 inclusive ⁴ :

	ETHNICITY	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS MADE ON PROMOTION ¹ , BY GRADE OF POST				
		BAND A ⁷	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E
Bands A-E ⁹						
All	9,592	1,515	1,916	3,008	2,897	256
BAME	3,829	480	740	1,320	1,203	86
White	5,091	897	1,017	1,496	1,525	156
Not declared	672	138	159	192	169	14

	ETHNICITY	NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL ⁶ APPLICATIONS MADE ON PROMOTION ¹ , BY GRADE OF POST				
		BAND A ⁷	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E
Bands A-E ⁹						
All	932	117	185	247	346	37

	ETHNICITY	NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL ⁶ APPLICATIONS MADE ON PROMOTION ¹ , BY GRADE OF POST				
BAME	234	17	39	67	104	7
White	660	95	137	169	230	2 9
Not declared	38	5	9	11	12	1

	ETHNICITY	PERCENTAGE OF APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED THAT WERE SUCCESSFUL IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS				
Bands A-E ⁹	Band A ⁷	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	
All	10%	8%	10%	8%	12%	14 %
BAME	6%	4%	5%	5%	9%	8%
White	13%	11%	13%	11%	15%	19 %
Not declared	6%	4%	6%	6%	7%	7%

■ Ministry of Justice: Travel

Ruth Jones:

[\[292426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2017.

Chris Philp:

In the 2017 calendar year, the ministers' private offices spend on air and rail travel was:

Air (standard/economy class) – £8,984.12

Air (business class) – £16,802.00

Rail (standard class) – £18,482.03

Rail (business & premium economy class) – £2,098

Total - £46,366.15

Ruth Jones:

[\[292427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department spent on ministerial travel by (a) first class, (b) second class and (c) in total in 2018.

Chris Philp:

In the 2018 calendar year, the ministers' private offices spend on air and rail travel was:

Air (standard/economy class) – £12,935.60

Air (business/first class) – £4005.60

Rail (standard class) – £16,730.70

Rail (first class) – None

Total - £33,671.90

■ Prisons: Arson**Mary Glendon:**[\[293570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many national prison arson reduction workshops have been held in each of the last 12 quarters; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

We will never compromise on the safety of those in our care, and staff are trained to respond to emergency situations in a timely, appropriate manner. The Government is taking unprecedented action to improve safety in custody. We have invested significantly in increasing staff numbers, recruiting an additional 4,366 (full time equivalent) prison officers between October 2016 and June 2019, surpassing our original target of 2,500. We will continue to recruit officers to ensure prisons are safe and decent.

The continued reduction of fires across the prison estate is of significant importance to HMPPS with an inaugural national arson reduction workshop held in April 2019. The objectives of the workshop were to develop national good practice to prevent fire setting, and to form an Arson Reduction Working Group. The Working Group met in June and will meet again this month.

■ Prisons: Contracts**Richard Burgon:**[\[293655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) contractors and (b) sub-contractors operated within the prison estate in each of the last three years.

Richard Burgon:[\[293656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish a list of (a) contractors and (b) sub-contractors operating within the prison estate in the most recent period for which information is available.

Lucy Frazer:

This request can only be answered at a disproportionate cost.

■ Prisons: Fire Prevention

Mary Glendon:

[\[293571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many enforcement notices have been issued in relation to prison fire safety arrangements in each of the last 12 quarters; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

The table below provides the numbers of enforcement notices have been issued in relation to prison fire safety arrangements in each of the last 12 quarters.

We take any such enforcement notices seriously and produce an action plan to ensure that compliance is quickly achieved whenever they are issued.

We are taking urgent action to improve safety and decency in our prisons, including spending up to £2.5 billion to create a modern and efficient estate fit for the future.

YEAR	QUARTER 1 (JAN-MAR)	QUARTER 2 (APR-JUN)	QUARTER 3 (JUL-SEP)	QUARTER 4 (OCT-DEC)
2016	-	-	-	3
2017	5	1	4	4
2018	3	0	2	0
2019	1	4	3	-

Mary Glendon:

[\[293572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many audits of prisons for maintenance of fire safety equipment have returned a finding of (a) amber-red and (b) red in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mary Glendon:

[\[293573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of maintenance of fire safety equipment and systems in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

We recognise the importance of ensuring good quality of fire safety equipment, and since June 2016 Level 2 audits have been carried out at all 111 HMPPS prison establishments for the two fire Statutory and Mandatory Compliance Standards. Previously Service Providers had been responsible for assuring compliance, however accurate information for this period is not held.

The table below provides the numbers of prisons which currently have amber/red and red ratings for maintenance of fire safety equipment. Actions plans have been put in place to improve the condition of equipment at all these prisons.

	AMBER/RED SITES	RED SITES
Fire alarm rating	11	9
Fire protection equipment rating	13	10

■ Prisons: Fires

Mary Glendon: [\[293568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the trends in the number of fire events in prisons in each of the last five years.

Mary Glendon: [\[293574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many fire events occurred in each prison in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

We will never compromise on the safety of those in our care, and staff are trained to respond to emergency situations in a timely, appropriate manner. The Government is taking unprecedented action to improve safety in custody. We have invested significantly in increased staff numbers, recruiting an additional 4,366 (full time equivalent) prison officers between October 2016 and June 2019, surpassing our original target of 2,500. We will continue to recruit officers to ensure prisons are safe and decent.

The table below provides the numbers of all fires in prisons between 2016 – 2018. Data prior to 2016 was not collected centrally and, as such, no reliable data before that time exists. However, the figures below show a significant fall in the number of fires in 2018, which coincides with the implementation of smoke free prisons and our actions to improve safety in custody.

YEAR	NUMBER OF FIRES	REDUCTION AS A PERCENTAGE OF PREVIOUS YEAR'S TOTAL
2014	Data not available	N/A
2015	Data not available	N/A
2016	2,314	N/A
2017	2,287	1.2%
2018	1,517	50.1%

Mary Glendon:

[\[293569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether vape pens have been used to start fires in prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

There is evidence, as part of wider data collected on fires in prisons, which confirms vape pens have been used as a source of ignition.

We will never compromise on the safety of those in our care, and staff are trained to respond to emergency situations in a timely, appropriate manner. The Government is taking unprecedented action to improve safety in custody. We have invested significantly in increase staff numbers, recruiting an additional 4,366 (full time equivalent) prison officers between October 2016 and June 2019, surpassing our original target of 2,500. We will continue to recruit officers to ensure prisons are safe and decent.

■ Supreme Court

Keith Vaz:

[\[291537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the President of the Supreme Court.

Chris Philp:

AS IS CUSTOMARY, THE LORD CHANCELLOR HAD AN INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT SOON AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT, AND AS IS USUALLY THE CASE, WILL MEET THE PRESIDENT SEVERAL TIMES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS ALSO REGULARLY MEET SUPREME COURT OFFICIALS.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Leader of the House of Commons: Crispin Odey

David Linden:

[\[292354\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if he will publish (a) the outcome of all meetings and (b) all call logs between Ministers of his office and Mr Crispin Odey.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

Details of Ministers' meetings are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Welfare State: Northern Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [292850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, by what date would legislation have to be introduced to prevent Welfare Reform mitigations in Northern Ireland expiring on 31 March 2020.

Julian Smith:

The Department for Communities in Northern Ireland is responsible for the delivery of the various mitigation schemes relating to welfare reform in Northern Ireland.

A decision to extend mitigations beyond March 2020 would be a matter for an incoming Minister for Communities in a restored Northern Ireland Executive.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Yemen: Armed Conflict**

Keith Vaz: [291539]

To ask the Prime Minister, what recent discussions he has had with (a) President Trump, (b) President Rouhani and (c) his Saudi Arabian counterpart on the situation in Yemen.

Boris Johnson:

In conversations about the situation in the region with my counterparts, I have reiterated the UK's support for the UN-led political process on Yemen. On 26 September, the UK co-hosted a political event at the UN General Assembly to coordinate the international community's support for the UN-led peace process and endorse the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths' plan to begin wider political discussion. We have longstanding concerns about Iranian involvement in Yemen and continue to urge Iran to be a constructive part of the solution to the conflict.

Stephen Twigg: [292799]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he discussed the conflict in Yemen in his meeting with Iran's President Hassan Rouhani on 24 September 2019.

Boris Johnson:

Details of my meeting with President Rouhani are available on the GOV.UK website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-president-rouhani-25-september>

SCOTLAND**■ Home Energy and Lifestyle Management: Green Deal Scheme****Alan Brown:**[\[292950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on HELMS Green Deal mis-selling; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Alister Jack:

I am aware that there are a large number of appeal cases, currently with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, regarding the activities of HELMS under the Green Deal. Under the Green Deal Framework Regulations, the Secretary of State for BEIS has the power to reduce or cancel loans where there has been a breach of the relevant rules, and she is satisfied that the consumer has suffered, or is likely to suffer, a substantive loss. I have been assured that BEIS is working to reach conclusions on these cases as soon as possible.

■ Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service: VAT**Alan Brown:**[\[292951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on VAT refunds for Police Scotland and Fire Scotland.

Mr Alister Jack:

I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer on important Scottish economic and fiscal matters.

At Budget 2017, we enabled Scottish Police and Fire services to claim VAT refunds of £40m per year going forward.

The Scottish Government was aware of the VAT consequences of its restructuring in 2012, but decided to proceed because the estimated financial savings outweighed the costs.

■ Scotland Office: Chief Scientific Advisers**Norman Lamb:**[\[292147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many meetings he had with his Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not have its own departmental Chief Scientific Adviser. Ministers of the Department regularly meet with a wide range of officials across Whitehall on a variety of issues.

■ Scotland Office: Crispin Odey**David Linden:** [\[292353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will publish (a) the outcome of all meetings and (b) all call logs between Ministers of his Department and Mr Crispin Odey.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Secretary of State for Scotland and Scotland Office Ministers have had no contact with Mr Crispin Odey. Details of Ministers' meetings are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK.

TRANSPORT**■ A14: Freight****Sandy Martin:** [\[293733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291480 on A14: Freight, whether Highways England has carried out a formal assessment of disruptions to freight traffic on any of the UK's strategic freight routes.

George Freeman:

Highways England assesses the performance of, and constraints on, the Strategic Road Network for all road users in order to compile its route strategies, which help inform decisions on future investment. The most recent strategies were published in 2017. Highways England deals with incidents on the network every day and has robust contingency plans in place to minimise disruption.

■ Air Travel Trust Fund: Annual Reports**Luke Pollard:** [\[293737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the annual report and accounts for the Air Travel Trust Fund for the year ending March 2019 have not been published on the CAA website.

Paul Maynard:

Preparation of the Air Travel Trust's 2019 Annual Report and Accounts was delayed due to the unplanned absence of key staff. As a result, they have not been signed off by the Trustees at this time.

The Annual Report and Accounts will be published on the CAA website in due course.

■ Air Travel Trust Fund: Insurance**Luke Pollard:** [\[293740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the levels of excess payments are on (a) insurance and (b) reinsurance policies taken out by the Civil Aviation Authority to cover payouts from the Air Travel Trust Fund.

Paul Maynard:

The Air Travel Trust Fund (ATT) is the primary source of funding when an ATOL holder fails. The ATT has in place insurance policies that provide the Trust with access to funds in the event of ATOL holder failure(s), where costs arising from refunds and repatriation exceed either £150 million, £70 million or £10 million in a policy year, depending on the size of the failed ATOL holder(s).

The specific terms of the policies are confidential between the ATT and its insurers.

■ **Aviation: Egypt****Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[293559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government will make an assessment of the potential merits of lifting the UK flight ban to Sharm el Sheikh.

Paul Maynard:

The Department for Transport undertakes aviation security assessments at overseas airports. UK aviation security experts are working closely with their Egyptian counterparts on the ground. It is long standing government policy not to comment on security matters, however I can confirm that we continue to work in partnership with the Egyptian authorities, sharing aviation security expertise, and are grateful for their close engagement and support.

We look forward to achieving the return of flights to Sharm el-Sheikh when the situation allows.

■ **Aviation: Volcanoes****James Gray:**[\[291531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what contingency plans his Department has put in place to mitigate disruption to air travel in the event of a large Icelandic volcanic eruption.

James Gray:[\[291532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the level of disruption to air travel as a result of the potential for an Icelandic volcanic eruption.

James Gray:[\[291533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to reduce the level of disruption to air travel since the Eyjafjallajökull eruption in 2010.

James Gray:[\[291534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with his Icelandic counterpart on the risk of a volcanic eruption in that region.

James Gray: [\[291535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what research his Department has reviewed on potential Icelandic volcanic activity and the effect of such activity on the UK.

James Gray: [\[291610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on the environment in the UK of a large volcanic eruption in Iceland.

Paul Maynard:

The department prepares for a wide range of incidents that have the potential to disrupt air operations in the UK.

Details on the risk to aviation from an Icelandic Volcanic event are set out in “UK National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies 2017.” This document includes details on the actions taken by government and industry since the Eyjafjallajökull eruption in 2010, as well as an assessment of the likelihood and impact of a future eruption. This covers both the risk of disruption from an ash rich eruption, as well as air pollution risks posed by a prolonged gas rich eruption, generating large amounts of sulphur dioxide and sulphate aerosol.

We are confident that contingency plans developed by the government and the aviation industry, alongside actions taken by the Icelandic authorities, will reduce significantly the level of disruption arising from a similar eruption to that in 2010. Volcanic activity across Iceland is kept under constant scrutiny and the contingency plans can be deployed quickly if required.

■ Bicycles: Electric Vehicles

Mr Damian Hinds: [\[293525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the take up and effectiveness of the incentives for e-cargo bikes announced on 10 September 2018.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The £2 million e-cargo bike programme was launched on 1st April 2019 and is being administered by the Energy Saving Trust. To date, 75 applications have been received worth around £240,000 (for 406 e-cargo bikes), with 69 grant offers made worth £180,000 (for 269 e-cargo bikes). This has created a significant boost for the e-cargo bike market.

To increase uptake of the scheme and to maximise early delivery of benefits, the Department recently made amendments to the eligibility criteria including increasing the maximum threshold for applications from £50,000 (50 bikes) to £200,000 (200 bikes), as well as allowing local authorities to apply for the grant to distribute locally.

■ Biofuels

Alan Brown: [\[292314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions if mandatory E10 fuels were introduced.

Alan Brown: [\[292315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to introduce mandatory E10 fuels; and if he will make a statement.

George Freeman:

Biofuels such as ethanol have a lower impact on net CO₂ emissions compared to fossil fuel derived petrol. In the consultation paper, "E10 petrol, consumer protection and fuel pump labelling", the Department noted that using E10 in place of E5 could reduce the net greenhouse gas emissions of a petrol vehicle by around two per cent. The consultation included a call for evidence on whether, and how best, E10 could be introduced in the UK, and the Department is working hard to publish a response as soon as possible this year.

■ Bristol Port Company

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[292840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the criteria was for deciding that Bristol Port needed £100,000 to prepare for the UK exiting the EU.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Port of Bristol was a successful applicant to the recent £10 million Port Infrastructure Connectivity and Resilience (PIRC) fund. The objectives of the fund are to help ports deliver contingency upgrades to enhance their capacity, maintain freight flow and improve overall resilience.

The PIRC fund was run as a fair and open competition for all English ports, whose project bids were then assessed against the objectives of the fund, and key criteria such as delivery date, capacity and capability, project delivery and longer term benefits, alongside key legal elements such as a state aid compliance.

There were 16 successful applicants to the fund receiving grants ranging from £100,000 to £1 million.

■ Bus Services: Disability

Catherine West: [\[291597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to introduce a requirement for buses to have audio visual (a) next stop and (b) final destination announcements.

George Freeman:

In Summer 2018 the Government consulted publicly on plans to use powers in the Bus Services Act 2017 to make Regulations requiring the provision of audible and visible information on-board local bus services across Great Britain. We continue to

analyse responses to the consultation and will announce our next steps regarding Regulations and publication of guidance later in the year.

The Government also plans to provide £2m to help smaller bus companies to provide information on-board their services.

■ Bus Services: Finance

Andy Slaughter:

[291561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how he plans to allocate the £200 million of increased funding to transform bus services announced in the Spending Round 2019.

George Freeman:

On 30 September this year, the Government announced a package to transform bus services. This package, worth £220 million in the first year, includes:

- Investing up to £50 million to deliver Britain's first all-electric bus town or city;
- Introducing the first 'Superbus' network approach to deliver low fare high frequency services in Cornwall;
- £30 million extra bus funding to be paid directly to local authorities to enable them to improve current bus services or to restore lost services;
- Investing over £20 million in bus priority measures in the West Midlands; and
- £20 million to support demand responsive services in rural and suburban areas.

Further details of the package can be found online with the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-better-deal-for-bus-users/a-better-deal-for-bus-users>

Ms Angela Eagle:

[293471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the £200 million of increased funding to transform bus services announced in the Spending Round 2019 he plans to allocate in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey.

George Freeman:

On 30 September, the Government announced a package worth £220 million to transform bus services.

We will shortly be seeking expressions of interest from local authorities and bus operators in developing an all-electric bus town or city. Up to £50 million will be invested to contribute to new buses and the supporting infrastructure.

We will also be seeking expressions of interest for the new £20 million fund for trialling on-demand services in rural and suburban areas.

The Government will also pay an extra £30 million directly to local authorities in 2020/21 to enable them to improve current bus services or to restore lost services.

The Government will fund a 4 year 'Superbus' pilot in Cornwall to bring down fares. We are also exploring whether a further pilot could be developed to decrease fares

and improve frequencies in an urban area through the local authority and bus operators entering into a partnership to deliver a Superbus network. The local authority would provide capital investment in bus lanes and other bus priority measures, in exchange for the bus operators delivering high frequency services.

Further details of the package can be found online with the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-better-deal-for-bus-users/a-better-deal-for-bus-users>

■ **Bus Services: North West**

Ms Angela Eagle:

[293473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many cessations of bus services (a) his Department and (b) Traffic Commissioners were notified of in (a) the North West, (b) Merseyside and (c) Wirral in each of the last five years.

George Freeman:

Changes to bus services are notified to the Traffic Commissioners.

The Traffic Commissioners' Annual Report for 2018-19 is due to be published in the Autumn. The latest published data from the Traffic Commissioners regarding the number of cancelled registrations can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-annual-report-2017-to-2018>

The numbers of cancelled registrations will not be the same as the number of cessations of bus services: a registration that is cancelled may be complemented by a new service introduction that is an exact match or a slight variation to the one which has been cancelled.

■ **Buses: Exhaust Emissions**

Andy Slaughter:

[291560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of buses in England (a) meet and (b) exceed Euro VI emission standards.

George Freeman:

Around 35% of buses in the English fleet meet the Euro VI emissions standards, or 12,150 buses. This includes buses which have been retrofitted to Euro VI standards.

Buses which exceed the Euro VI emissions standard are zero emission buses. There are 317 zero emission buses in operation in England, or 0.91% of the total number in the bus fleet.

■ Bypasses: Ipswich**Sandy Martin:** [\[293732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe is for his Department to (a) consider the strategic outline business case for the provision of a North Ipswich bypass and (b) publish its response to that business case.

Sandy Martin: [\[293734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291482, what the length of time was between the submission of a strategic outline business case by the relevant sub-national transport body and the communication of an initial assessment of the proposed scheme by his Department for the most recent scheme costing over £100 million for which his Department provided such an assessment.

George Freeman:

All Strategic Outline Business Cases which were submitted to the Department on 31st July have gone through a robust assessment process over the summer. This followed guidance made available on gov.uk.

The Department has been in contact with Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs), including Transport East, to discuss the outcomes of the assessment process for all regions' Strategic Outline Business Cases, including that for the provision of a North Ipswich bypass. Formal advice on the scheme will be sent to Suffolk County Council shortly.

■ Department for Transport: Crispin Odey**David Linden:** [\[292361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish (a) the outcome of all meetings and (b) all call logs between Ministers of his Department and Mr Crispin Odey.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department does not hold any records of any meetings or phone call logs between departmental Ministers and Mr Crispin Odey in the past twelve months.

■ Department for Transport: Ethnic Groups**Chris Stephens:** [\[292942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of staff who applied for promotion within his Department from 1 September 2018 to 1 September 2019 and who identified as (a) BAME and (b) White were successful by each grade in his Department.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The way that roles are advertised as either across government or external means that it is not possible to identify promotion opportunities only available to existing Department for Transport employees.

The data which can be provided is the number and proportion of BAME and White total applicants and successful applicants for all recruitment campaigns between 1 September 2018 and 1 September 2019. The whole data set is provided because existing Department for Transport employees have the opportunity to apply for all these roles and could achieve a promotion if successful.

This breakdown provided in the table and covers the Department for Transport and its four Executive Agencies (the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)).

GRADE	ETHNIC GROUP	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	TOTAL NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS	% OF TOTAL APPLICATIONS BY ETHNICITY AT EACH GRADE	
				% OF TOTAL APPLICATIONS BY ETHNICITY AT EACH GRADE	% OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS
Administrative Officer	White	274	57	94%	93%
	BAME	12	4	4%	7%
	Prefer not to say	5	0	2%	0%
	Total:	291	61		
Executive Officer	White	1085	98	85%	94%
	BAME	153	3	12%	3%
	Prefer not to say	40	3	3%	3%
	Total:	1278	104		
Higher Executive Officer	White	1186	81	57%	75%
	BAME	739	21	35%	19%
	Prefer not to say	157	6	8%	6%

GRADE	ETHNIC GROUP	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	TOTAL NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS	% OF TOTAL APPLICATIONS BY ETHNICITY AT EACH GRADE	% OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS BY ETHNICITY AT EACH GRADE
Senior Executive Officer	say				
	Total:	2082	108		
	White	763	63	53%	68%
	BAME	542	23	38%	25%
	Prefer not to say	128	6	9%	7%
Grade 7	Total:	1433	92		
	White	611	56	61%	88%
	BAME	310	4	31%	7%
	Prefer not to say	86	4	9%	7%
	Total:	1007	64		
Grade 6	White	378	33	76%	92%
	BAME	80	0	16%	0%
	Prefer not to say	40	3	8%	8%
	Total:	498	36		
TOTAL		WHITE		BAME	
Applications		65%		28%	
				7%	

TOTAL	WHITE	BAME	PREFER NOT TO SAY
Successful	84%	12%	4%

More details on the limitations of providing data on only promotions.

For vacancies advertised across government, individuals need to have a verified account to confirm their eligibility as existing Civil Servants. As part of their personal profile, Civil Servants are requested to provide their current substantive grade. If individuals have not completed their personal profile we would be unable to identify whether they were promoted.

For vacancies advertised externally, individuals have the option to use a privately registered account as there is no requirement for them to confirm that they are existing Civil Servants. This means that in the instance that an existing Civil Servant applies for an externally advertised vacancy using a private account, then we cannot identify whether or not the successful individual is being promoted.

The diversity of applicants applying for posts that are advertised regionally will be affected by the percentage of BAME individuals in the working population.

■ Driving under Influence: Deaths

Jim Shannon:

[\[293586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to help reduce the number of deaths caused by driving under the influence of alcohol.

George Freeman:

The Government is committed to preventing people from driving under the influence of alcohol. We employ a combined approach of tough penalties and rigorous enforcement along with our highly respected and effective THINK! campaigns to reinforce the social unacceptability of drink driving and to remind people of the serious ramifications of drink driving on themselves and others.

The Department has also taken some important steps to tighten drink driving legislation. We have made it a requirement for high-risk offenders to undertake medical tests before they are allowed to drive again, and we have also made sure that drivers over the breath limit cannot escape a conviction by demanding a further blood or urine test.

■ Freight

Tom Brake:

[\[291526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the (a) cost to the public purse of and (b) length of time required for Government-secured freight capacity in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The framework will be in place for four years, and has a maximum value of £300 million over that timeframe, of which up to £150 million will be available to secure freight capacity for EU Exit preparedness.

■ Isle of Wight: Transport

Stephen Morgan: [\[292983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve transport links between the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth.

Stephen Morgan: [\[292984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has his Department made of the effect on the (a) economic prosperity (b) well-being of people on the Isle of Wight of improved transport links between the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth.

George Freeman:

The department recently announced a £26 million investment in new trains and track improvements on the Isle of Wight's Island Line. The improvements will include a new passing loop at Brading, which will help to deliver an even interval half-hourly service to the pier. This will allow the train to connect better with local ferry services. This follows a multi-million pound commitment for Network Rail to make improvements to renew Ryde Railway Pier where trains connect with ferries to Portsmouth.

The Government of course recognises the importance for local residents and businesses of good quality ferry services between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. These locations are linked directly by ferry services provided by Wightlink between Portsmouth and Fishbourne or Ryde as well as hovercraft services operated by Hovertravel between Southsea and Ryde.

These services are provided on a commercial basis by Wightlink and Hovertravel, without financial support from Government. The frequency of services, fares and other matters relating to the services are for those companies to determine.

The Secretary of State met the hon member for the Isle of Wight (Bob Seeley MP) in August to discuss ferry services between the island and the mainland generally, including fare levels and service reliability.

■ Large goods vehicles

Tom Brake: [\[291529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the proportion of HGV operations that that will be prepared for new border processes on 31 October 2019 in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have now worked extensively with hauliers' associations like the RHA and FTA, meaning we are now substantially better prepared than we would have been in March.

The Government published its assessment of the flow of freight across the border in a Reasonable Worst Case scenario as part of its response to the Humble Address motion of 9 September. This set out the assumptions drawn up under the last government.

Over recent months, the Government has taken significant steps to improve levels of trader and haulier readiness to improve overall flow across the short Strait crossings. This includes a £100m public information campaign and additional funding for businesses and trade associations to draw upon to enable preparations.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: EU Countries

Deidre Brock:

[\[292930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) ECMT and (b) short-term ECMT international road haulage permits have been (i) applied for, (ii) approved and (iii) refused each month in the last 12 months.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The monthly breakdown for the requested figures is as follows:

	ANNUAL ECMT PERMITS			SHORT TERM ECMT PERMITS		
	Applied	Approved	Refused	Applied	Approved	Refused
Oct-18	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov-18	3,781	0	0	0	0	0
Dec-18	4,493	0	0	0	0	0
Jan-19	3,118	0	0	0	0	0
Feb-19	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar-19	582	1,602	10,408	9	0	0
Apr-19	0	467	0	2	11	0
May-19	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun-19	0	0	0	1	1	0
Jul-19	2	2	0	1	1	0
Aug-19	0	0	0	10	1	0
Sep-19		0	0	224	72	40

Short-term ECMT permits have only been refused where the proposed journey can be conducted without an ECMT permit.

As of 2 October 2019, 112 short-term ECMT permit requests are under consideration. These are usually within 10 working days, it may be longer where the need has to be established.

Annual ECMT permit applications were mostly made in anticipation of the UK leaving the EU on 29 March 2019 when there were no other confirmed market access arrangements in place.

On 25 March 2019 the EU adopted Regulation 2019/501 for basic road transport connectivity if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. Under the regulation, UK hauliers will be able to carry out road haulage to EU Member States until 31 December 2019 and make the vast majority journeys without a permit.

The European Commission has also, on 4 September 2019, published a proposal to extend this measure until 31 July 2020.

■ Large goods vehicles: EU countries

Deidre Brock:

[\[292931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2019 to Question 274650 on Large Goods Vehicles: EU Countries, which bilateral agreements he expects to be (a) revived and (b) reinstated.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

It is our view that, in the absence of an EU agreement, 21 historic bilateral agreements would revive in full on exit as they have not been expressly terminated. Agreements with Ireland, Denmark, Spain, Belgium and Italy have terminated, but offer a good basis for future discussions.

Some of the revived agreements may need some amendments to make them fit for purpose, which can be done by an exchange of notes between the Parties.

For those agreements that are no longer in force, we would expect to conclude new treaties in the absence of EU-wide arrangements.

■ Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Andy Slaughter:

[\[291562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will introduce a vehicle labelling scheme for new and second-hand cars and vans detailing the real world nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emissions of vehicles.

George Freeman:

The Government currently has no plans to introduce a UK-specific vehicle labelling scheme for emissions of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, but has taken a leading role in the development of Green New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP), a consumer information programme aimed at providing clear guidance on the environmental performance of new vehicles.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance

Afzal Khan:

[292996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has made of the effect on young drivers of pay-as-you-drive car insurance.

George Freeman:

The Government has made no assessment of the effect pay-as-you-drive car insurance on young drivers.

The insurance market is very competitive and there are a wide range of policies that young drivers can choose from. Pay-as you-drive car insurance policies are one of a number of measures that young drivers have the option to take to help them reduce their insurance premiums.

■ Northern

Grahame Morris:

[293527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 July 2019 to Question 279431 on Northern, what allowable Changes are permitted under the terms of the Arriva Rail North franchise agreement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In common with all Franchise Agreements, the Northern Franchise Agreement sets out the many allowable Changes that are permitted under its terms. Those that have been triggered so far include changes to the timing and scope of infrastructure upgrades from those assumed at the bid, changes to the fares policy and changes to charges paid to Network Rail. The Northern Franchise agreement is publicly available at the DfT website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-rail-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>.

Grahame Morris:

[293528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 July 2019 to Question 279431 on Northern, what the net financial impact was of the allowable Changes made under the terms of the Arriva Rail North franchise agreement in 2016-17.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The net financial impact of the allowable Changes made under the terms of the Arriva Rail North franchise agreement in 2016-17 was £1,951,000 as valued at the time.

■ Ports

Mark Field:

[291550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) financial and (b) logistical support (i) has been and (ii) will be provided to port operators and port health authorities for potential changes in (A) throughput and (B) volume of trade at UK border control posts after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport has put in place £30M of funding for ports, Local Resilience Forums, and road & rail links.

Financial support is provided for sixteen ports across England who will receive a share of funding to help their preparations for Brexit on 31 October and beyond. The successful bidders of the £10m Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity (PIRC) competition offers ports up to £1m each to deliver important infrastructure upgrades to help keep traffic and trade flowing smoothly across the border.

The fund PIRC is part of a wider £30m government package to support ports across England to operate efficiently post-Brexit. DfT is providing up to £5m to four Local Resilience Forums (LRF) outside Kent with the highest volumes of accompanied road freight traffic with EU ports. A further £15m will go towards the development of longer-term projects to boost road and rail links to ports.

Arrangements and support for Port Health and border operations are a matter for the responsible Government Departments.

Tom Brake:[\[292789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on UK ports of the UK leaving the EU under the Government's worst case planning assumptions.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has been liaising with ports and local partners on Brexit preparedness, for some time. In Kent, along with Highways England and other partners, the Department has been working closely to develop Operation Brock, which is intended to provide the resilience and flexibility required to deal with any disruption to cross-Channel travel from Kent ports. As well as keeping freight moving through our ports, the contingency measures of Operation Brock are designed to keep Kent's road network moving for local people, businesses and visitors.

The Department has also engaged closely with localities outside Kent, and has recently shared revised analysis of the potential impact of a no deal Brexit on key ports with the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in Humber, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Merseyside, Lancashire, Essex and North Wales. It is now for those LRFs to consider how this impacts on their traffic management contingency plans and whether any amendments are required.

Ports: Finance**Chris Ruane:**[\[293474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the criteria was for the selection of bids for funding for the Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity competition.

Chris Ruane:

[\[293475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that funding allocated through the Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity competition represents value for money for taxpayers.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The aim of the Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity (PIRC) Fund is to secure, by way of a grant, investment in English maritime ports that improves the resilience of the relevant ports to handle potential disruption from a no deal EU exit on 31 October, and also enhance ports' resilience capabilities to maximise post-EU exit trade opportunities.

The bids received from ports for grants from the Fund were carefully assessed by officials at the Department for Transport and technical advisers against the following pre-determined criteria:

- Delivery date of the project
- Capacity & capability to be delivered
- Project deliverability & cost
- Longer term resilience benefits.

The 16 bids that performed best against these criteria were duly selected for grant funding, as announced by the Secretary of State on 26 September.

The bid assessment process should ensure that bids selected represent value for money. Further, the Department will now be monitoring successful bidders under the terms of grant agreements to make sure that the projects are delivered on time and on budget, so that grants are spent effectively and appropriately. Grants will only be paid in arrears following evidence that the work has been completed. Further, as per best practice for HMG grants, a review will be carried out at an appropriate time to assess the benefits of the scheme.

■ Ports: Infrastructure

Tom Brake:

[\[291530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the improvements to port infrastructure on the UK side of channel since June 2019 on potential goods disruption after the UK leaves the EU; and what comparative assessment he has made of the effect of those improvements and the improvements made on the French side of the English Channel.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

It was announced on 26 September that sixteen ports across England will receive a share of a multimillion-pound funding pot to help their preparations for Brexit on 31 October and beyond. The successful bidders of the £10 million Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity (PIRC) competition offers ports up to £1 million each to

deliver important infrastructure upgrades to help keep traffic and trade flowing smoothly across the border.

The fund is part of a wider £30 million government package to support ports across England to operate efficiently post-Brexit of which DfT is providing up to £5 million to four Local Resilience Forums (LRF) outside Kent with the highest volumes of accompanied road freight traffic with EU ports. A further £15 million will go towards the development of longer-term projects to boost road and rail links to ports.

It is for the relevant LRFs to consider how this impacts on port infrastructure and local traffic management plans. DfT will continue to support this work.

■ Railways: Fares

Sandy Martin:

[\[293736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department will review the cost of train fares.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government understands the concern about the cost of some rail fares and the impact that this can have on people's budgets. This is why the Government has ensured that regulated rail fares can rise by no more than inflation for the last six years. The Williams Review is considering how to enable a railway that is able to offer good value fares for passengers, while keeping costs down for taxpayers.

■ Roads

Dan Jarvis:

[\[R\]](#) [\[291576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve road connectivity between South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.

George Freeman:

The first Road Investment Strategy committed to an investment package worth over £170 million for existing Sheffield-Manchester connections to address safety and congestion issues, and improve journey times. Highways England has announced a preferred route which covers the:

- Mottram Moor link road;
- A57(T) to A57 link road;
- A616/A61(T) Westwood roundabout; and,
- Safety and technology improvements along the route.

The Department for Transport, in conjunction with Highways England and Transport for the North, is undertaking a study looking at the long term strategic road connection requirements to link the areas of Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire to transform journeys and enhance connectivity across the southern Pennines. This includes consideration of a trans-Pennine tunnel. The study is expected to report in spring 2020.

■ Roads: Finance

Sandy Martin:

[293735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will fund the improvement to junctions on the A14 with the A1156 (East of Ipswich) and A12 (North), the A1189, the A1214 and A12 (South) and the A1156 (West of Ipswich) as requested by the New Anglia LEP and associated organisations.

George Freeman:

The Department is considering this and other proposals for enhancements to the Strategic Road Network as part of the second Road Investment Strategy. The Strategy, which will set out an investment plan for 2020 to 2025, is expected to be announced shortly.

Development work for improvements to Copdock Interchange (the junction between the A14 and A12(South)) is being supported with funding from the Port Infrastructure Fund, as announced on 26 September.

■ Taxis

Wes Streeting:

[293659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has received on the need for regulatory reform in the taxi and private hire industry.

George Freeman:

Ministers and officials at the Department for Transport meet regularly with representatives of the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle sector to discuss a wide range of issues. Quarterly information on ministerial meetings is published at:

<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/789fd6df-87a9-4144-bc59-62b0b84e59f0/departments-for-transport-ministerial-and-special-adviser-meetings-with-external-organisations-including-meetings-with-newspaper-and-other-media-proprietors-editors-and-senior-executives>.

■ Taxis: Audio Equipment

Dr Matthew Offord:

[292893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of drivers of private hire vehicles using a microphone whilst in transit.

George Freeman:

The Department has not made an estimate of the number of private hire vehicle drivers using a microphone whilst in transit.

■ Transport: Finance

Jo Stevens:

[293616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the amount of money spent from the public purse on transport per head of population in (a) Wales, (b) England and (c) Scotland.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Figures on public sector expenditure at a national level are part of the Government's Country and Regional Analysis (CRA) statistics.

The statistics include spend on transport by all public sector organisations including the Department for Transport, Local Authorities, Public Corporations (in the case of transport, this is mainly spend by London Underground) and other government departments including devolved administrations.

Please note that much of the responsibility for transport in Wales and, in particular Scotland, is devolved to the Welsh and Scottish administrations. For example, responsibility for strategic roads and local roads in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Government and Welsh local authorities respectively, who are therefore responsible for related funding decisions.

When comparing expenditure across regions a number of factors should be considered. For example, when expenditure is presented on a "per head of population" basis, it does not account for the pressure that large numbers of commuters and visitors from outside of a region can add to the transport networks. In addition, larger built-up areas tend to make greater use of mass public transport systems, and these will generate fares income which contributes to their operating costs.

Table 1: Public expenditure on all transport, by all public sector bodies in 2017-18 (£ per head of population)

(A) WALES	£410
(b) England	£475
(c) Scotland	£667

Source: Table A.15 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/country-and-regional-analysis-2018>

■ West Coast Partnership Rail Franchise: Cleaning Services

Lisa Nandy:

[292901]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Leadeo cleaning staffing provision will be maintained on the First Trenitalia West Coast franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The operational management of the franchise will be a matter for the operator, First Trenitalia West Coast, who can be contacted via First Group (<https://www.firstgroupplc.com/>)

■ West Coast Partnership Rail Franchise: Rolling Stock

Lisa Nandy:

[\[292902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what specification has been provided for the (a) new and (b) renovated fleet on the First Trenitalia West Coast Franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State specified that rolling stock on the West Coast Partnership suits its leisure, business and commuting passengers. This will be realised through the introduction of 23 brand new trains on the network, including 13 new bi-modes and 10 new electric multiple units. Voyager class trains will be refreshed by September 2020 and there will be a £117m investment to renovate the Pendolino fleet.

TREASURY

■ Bank of England: Public Appointments

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[292849\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timeframe is for the next Governor of the Bank of England to take up their post.

John Glen:

The process to appoint the next Governor of the Bank of England was [launched](#) in April. The process is on track. We will make an announcement in due course, ahead of the start of the next Governor's term on 1 February 2020.

■ Bank Services

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[293713\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the incorrect filing of dormant accounts.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC use data analytics tools to identify companies which have submitted a company tax return including dormant accounts when HMRC hold information to suggest company activity during the return period. Any companies identified will normally be subject to an enquiry.

Under the auspices of the Digital Economy Act 2017 HMRC also use their data analytics tools to identify companies which appear to have incorrectly submitted dormant accounts to Companies House. Details of these companies are passed to Companies House so that they can take appropriate action.

■ Banks

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[293551\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many retail bank branches there are per head of population.

John Glen:

HM Treasury does not hold this information. However, the House of Commons Library published a report on 'Bank branch and ATM statistics' on 17 May 2019 which includes helpful information on this topic, based on ONS data.

■ Banks: Investment

Paul Farrelly: [\[293483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to increase the transparency of banks' investments, in particular the financing of arms, pesticides, plastic packaging and fossil fuels.

John Glen:

The Companies, Partnerships and Groups (Accounts and Non-Financial Reporting) Regulations 2016 require banks to disclose the impact of their activities on social and environmental matters.

In addition, the Government launched in July its Green Finance Strategy with the ambition to align private sector financial flows with clean, environmentally sustainable and resilient growth. In the Strategy, the Government set an expectation that all listed companies and large asset owners, including banks, will make disclosures in line with the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures by 2022.

■ Border Delivery Group

Stephen Doughty: [\[293597\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the detailed planning assumptions of the Border Delivery Group for each month since January 2019.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recently published its reasonable worst case planning assumptions on 11 September, setting out the Government's assessment as of 2 August. Planning assumptions are held under constant review, to reflect the latest evidence and analysis of the potential impact of leaving the EU without a deal. The Government's updated planning assumptions will be published in due course.

■ Business

Layla Moran: [\[292987\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of Operation Kingfisher's (a) bailout fund and (b) administration.

Rishi Sunak:

We continue to monitor and work closely with businesses across the country to help ensure they are fully prepared for when the UK leaves the EU.

As such, the government has already made over £6.3bn available to prepare for EU exit. This includes £2 billion of core funding for departments for Brexit in 2020-21, which was confirmed in the recent Spending Round.

Luciana Berger:[\[293533\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of businesses affected by Operation Kingfisher; and what plans his Department has made to mitigate the effects on those business.

Rishi Sunak:

As preparation for EU exit, the government has already made £6.3bn available and we have created a £108m Brexit Business Preparedness Pot – which is being allocated across government.

The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy has – from this pot - introduced a £15m Business Readiness Grant Scheme to enable business representative organisations to aid SMEs across England and the UK to prepare for Brexit.

We will continue to monitor and work closely with businesses across the country to help ensure they are fully prepared for when the UK leaves the EU.

Luciana Berger:[\[293534\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria his Department has set for businesses which wish to apply for the bailout fund created by Operation Kingfisher.

Rishi Sunak:

The first port of call for a business facing cashflow issues should be commercial lending. As the Bank of England have said, UK banks are well-prepared, well-capitalised, and publicly committed to continuing to lend to viable businesses.

Overall, the government has already made over £6.3bn available to prepare for EU exit. This includes £2 billion of core funding for departments for Brexit in 2020-21, which was confirmed in the recent Spending Round.

The UK economy remains resilient, but we will continue to closely monitor any developments in economic risks to firms, sectors, and regions. We are considering what further support may be needed and any announcements will be made in due course.

■ Business: Brexit**Tom Brake:**[\[292791\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funding his Department has allocated to Operation Kingfisher.

Rishi Sunak:

HM Treasury and the Bank of England have a number of economic tools at their disposal in preparation for EU exit and stand ready to deploy them as and when necessary.

Overall, the government has already made over £6.3bn available to prepare for EU exit. This includes £2 billion of core funding for departments for Brexit in 2020-21, which was confirmed in the recent Spending Round.

We continue to monitor and work closely with businesses across the country to help ensure they are fully prepared for when the UK leaves the EU.

■ Child Benefit: Adoption**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[292330\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the child benefit rules to include support to all parents of adopted children.

Rishi Sunak:

Child Benefit provides support to all parents of adopted children where those parents are responsible for the adopted children. A person is treated as being responsible for a child, whether that child is adopted or not adopted, where:

- the child living is with them;
- they are contributing to the cost of providing for the child at a weekly rate not less than the weekly rate of Child Benefit payable in respect of that child for that week.

■ Economic Situation**Rachael Maskell:**[\[293648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of economic effect of the UK leaving the EU without a deal; and whether that assessment has changed compared with assessments made before 29 March 2019.

John Glen:

We would prefer to leave with a deal, and we continue to work in an energetic and determined way to get that better deal.

The Government is turbocharging preparations to ensure we are ready to leave with or without a deal on 31 October, and all necessary funds will be made available.

The fundamentals of the British economy are strong – real wages are growing; employment is at a record high and the unemployment rate is at a historic low.

Short-term forecasting is undertaken by the Office for Budget Responsibility in line with its statutory duty. In line with its remit, the OBR's forecasts include the economic and fiscal impact of government policy on EU exit where the effects can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

The Bank of England has provided analysis of the EU exit impacts on the UK economy consistent with its responsibilities on monetary policy.

■ Employment: Taxation

Jonathan Edwards: [293521]

To ask the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, how HMRC established its estimate that nine out of 10 contractors are not compliant with current off-payroll working rules in the private sector.

Jonathan Edwards: [293522]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress HMRC has made on improving the Check Employment Status for Tax digital service.

Jonathan Edwards: [293523]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment HMRC has made of the potential loss of tax revenue resulting from a blanket determination of the tax status of individual contractors by private companies.

Jonathan Edwards: [293524]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress HMRC has made on establishing a status disagreement process to ensure that contractors can raise concerns directly with client companies.

Jesse Norman:

The off-payroll working rules (sometimes known as IR35) have been in place since 2000. They are designed to ensure that individuals working like employees pay broadly the same amount of tax and National Insurance Contributions, regardless of the structure they work through. They do not affect the self-employed.

Budget 2018 announced that reforms introduced in 2017 for the public sector would be extended to all sectors, from April 2020, giving businesses time to prepare. The Government has consulted extensively on the reform and HMRC are publishing guidance as well as delivering an education and support programme.

HMRC's estimates for non-compliance with the off-payroll working rules are based on relevant tax return data.

HMRC continue to work with stakeholders to make improvements to the Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) digital service and wider guidance.

Enhancements will be rigorously tested with stakeholders, and operational and legal experts, and will be available for use later in 2019.

HMRC have been clear that it is not correct to rule all off-payroll workers to be within or outside the rules irrespective of their contractual terms and working arrangements. On 11 July 2019, HMRC published a Tax Information and Impact Note setting out the impact on individuals, households and families of the reform in the private sector.

This can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020>

The Government also published draft legislation on 11 July 2019 which sets out the status disagreement process that clients will need to implement in time for April 2020.

HMRC have published guidance to support customers in making these changes which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/april-2020-changes-to-off-payroll-working-for-clients>

■ EU Countries: British Nationals abroad

Paul Farrelly: [\[293484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional checks there will be for UK passport holders arriving into an EU country in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Jesse Norman:

The EU has confirmed that UK passport holders will be treated as third country nationals under the Schengen Borders Code, which mandates additional checks, including questioning and wet stamping of passports. If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, UK passport holders will be eligible for visa-free travel to the EU for periods of up to 90 days within a 180-day period.

■ Housing

Catherine West: [\[292970\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury of 30 September 2019, Official Report, column 981, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the housing sector of short positions against the pound in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Rishi Sunak:

We are focused on getting a deal and we are working in a determined way to get that deal.

The fundamentals of our economy are strong: wages are growing, employment is at a record high and the unemployment rate is at a historic low. Further, since 2010, the Government has increased housing supply by over 1.3m, including 430,000 affordable homes. Over 222,000 additional homes were delivered in 2017/18 – the highest level in all but one of the last 31 years.

The Government and the independent Bank of England have the policy tools available to them, and we'll work closely with the Bank of England to ensure fiscal and monetary remain well co-ordinated.

■ Insurance

Chris Ruane: [\[292844\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of to Question 291263, what steps (a) his Department and (b) the FCA have taken to ensure that insurers are aware of their responsibility to inform consumers of changes to the way their policies are serviced in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

John Glen:

HMT has been assessing the risk that a small minority of insurance payments from UK insurers into the EU may be delayed. While HMT is responsible for setting the policy direction, it is the role of the independent regulator – the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) – to engage with industry and test firm planning.

The FCA has made it clear to insurers and insurance intermediaries that they should have appropriate plans in place to manage a no-deal exit, this should include plans to communicate with consumers should there be a change in the way their policy is serviced. The FCA expects firms to continue to service all their customers as fully and fairly as the law permits, including what regulatory protections will apply for their customers. The FCA has delivered these messages through a combination of direct contact with firms, senior leadership speeches, dedicated Brexit pages on its website, and trade association events.

■ Low Pay: Young People**Hugh Gaffney:**[\[293695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to tackle low pay amongst workers aged 21 and below.

Rishi Sunak:

Each year the Government asks the Low Pay Commission to recommend minimum wage rates for younger people that are as high as possible without damaging their employment prospects. All the National Minimum Wage rates for younger workers saw above inflation increases in April 2019. The Low Pay Commission will make recommendations for the April 2020 rates later in the autumn. Alongside changes to the minimum wage, the Government is taking action to support young people to gain the skills they need to succeed in the labour market, including the rollout of T Levels from September 2020, which will provide students with clear pathways to a well-paid skilled job.

■ Members: Correspondence**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[292856\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department, when he plans to respond to the letter of 10 December 2018 from the hon. Member for North Durham to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on Landfill Tax Fraud.

Jesse Norman:

I can assure the Hon. Member for North Durham that a response to this letter has now been issued. I would like to apologise for the delay, which was due to an administrative error.

■ Minimum Wage

Faisal Rashid: [\[294237\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will increase the minimum wage to £10.50 in the next Budget.

Rishi Sunak:

Both the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage rates for younger workers and apprentices saw above inflation increases in April. The National Living Wage is currently on target to reach 60 per cent of median hourly earnings in 2020, subject to sustained economic growth. The independent Low Pay Commission will recommend next year's rates to us later this month, and we will announce the rates at the next Budget.

The Chancellor has also announced his intention to increase the National Living Wage to two-thirds of median hourly earnings within five years. He will confirm this at the next Budget.

■ Motor Vehicles: Insurance

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[294164\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Financial Conduct Authority on the cost to consumers of private motor insurance auto-renewals.

John Glen:

The FCA has published this month its interim report into General Insurance Pricing Practices. Consumers should always be able to get a fair deal and it is vital that the FCA comes to a solution that will achieve this important outcome as quickly as possible.

It is for regulators to determine the powers they use to address problems in the markets they regulate. If needed, the Government has committed to legislate to give regulators new powers to stop loyal customers being taken advantage of.

■ Public Expenditure

Lucy Powell: [\[292916\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the next Spending Review will be (a) launched and (b) completed.

Rishi Sunak:

The next multi-year Spending Review will be carried out in 2020. The dates will be announced in due course.

■ Public Sector: Pensions

Angela Crawley: [\[294204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made on the public sector pension scheme valuation.

Rishi Sunak:

Valuations of the public service pension schemes are carried out every four years. The valuations set employer contribution rates to ensure the full costs of pensions are recognised and met by employers at the point scheme liabilities arise. The last valuations of the schemes considered the position as at 31 March 2016 and were completed earlier this year. Employer contribution rates have been set and came into effect on 1 April 2019. On 19 January the then Chief Secretary to the Treasury made a written statement (HCWS1286) announcing a pause to the cost control element of the valuations. The pause was necessary following a court ruling that an element of the reforms made to schemes in 2015 gave rise to unlawful discrimination. The matter has been remitted to the Employment Tribunal to determine how the discrimination is to be remedied. The Government has confirmed that it will take steps to remedy the discrimination in all public service pension schemes. Until a remedy is agreed it is not possible to assess the value of the public service pension schemes with any certainty at this time.

Public Sector: Redundancy Pay**Steve McCabe:**[\[293443\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the inclusion of pension strain within the £95,000 cap on public sector exit payments on long-serving public servants on low to middle salaries.

Rishi Sunak:

The government was clear during the passage of the primary legislation that the cap will have no impact on the majority of public sector workers. We do however accept that there will be some circumstances where it is necessary or desirable to relax the cap. As such, a waiver system is in place for use in exceptional situations, including where imposing the cap would cause genuine hardship.

An impact assessment was conducted and published in the 2016 consultation ahead of the primary legislation. This impact assessment took the inclusion of pension strain into account and can be found [here](#). A further equalities assessment will be conducted on the final version of the regulations. The government is currently considering responses to the consultation on the draft regulations to implement the public sector exit payment cap and will respond to the consultation in due course.

The government believes it is right to include all payments related to exit within the cap. The cap does not affect any pension that a person has earned through their years of service or have any impact on accrued pension rights. The cap ensures additional contribution to that pension made by the employer to fund early access to a pension is limited to no more than £95,000, on account these costs are ultimately funded by the taxpayer.

■ Social Security Benefits

Marsha De Cordova: [\[293002\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the benefit freeze will be lifted in 2020.

Rishi Sunak:

The Government has no intention of repeating or prolonging the current freeze on working age benefits. From 2020, the Government expects increases in benefits will resume in line with CPI.

■ Taxation

Anneliese Dodds: [\[293714\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of taxpayers were in each tax bracket who were contacted by HMRC in respect of tax compliance checks.

Jesse Norman:

The information requested is not available.

■ Treasury: Brexit

Rachael Maskell: [\[293645\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department budgeted to support (a) other Government departments and (b) the Government's arms-length agencies in preparation for the UK leaving the EU without a deal in each financial year since 2016-17.

Rishi Sunak:

The government has provided: over £4.2bn of additional funding from 2016 to the present financial year (2019-20) for departments and devolved administrations to prepare for all EU exit scenarios (a breakdown of these allocations can be found in Table E.6 (page 77) of HM Treasury's 2018 Annual Statement on European Finances); a further £2bn for the 2020-21 financial year, announced at Spending Round 2019.

For no-deal preparations specifically the Chancellor also: made £2.1bn available on 1 August 2019 for this financial year (2019-20); confirmed the HMG Guarantee on 30 September 2019, which would apply if the UK leaves the EU without a deal and should the EU cease to fund UK organisations after EU exit. This guarantee relates to UK organisations in receipt of certain EU programme funding. The total amount expected to be covered by the guarantee would be £4.3bn for this financial year.

■ Treasury: Chief Scientific Advisers

Norman Lamb: [\[292145\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings he had with his Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

Rishi Sunak:

HM Treasury is committed to ensuring that we access the very best scientific expertise. The Director for the Enterprise and Growth Unit, who is responsible for public science funding, acts as HM Treasury's Chief Scientific Adviser and meets with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regularly.

■ **Treasury: Crispin Odey****David Linden:**[\[292359\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish (a) the outcome of all meetings and (b) all call logs between Ministers of his Department and Mr Crispin Odey.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Details of Ministers' meetings are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK

■ **UK Debt Management Office****Rachael Maskell:**[\[293646\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the UK Debt Management Office has loaned to (a) the City of York local authority, (b) local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) local authorities in the UK in each year since 2010-11; and how much has been repaid to date.

John Glen:

The UK Debt Management Office runs the day-to-day-operations of the Public Works Loan Board on behalf of the Public Works Loan Commissioners.

The following table details the amount the Public Works Loan Board has loaned to the City of York, Local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber, and Local Authorities in the UK, by year, in millions of pounds.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (APR-SEPT)
£ MILLIONS										
City of York local authority	14	133.55	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0
Local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber	260.49	804.13	249.66	74.3	54.709	263.78	202.1	274.406	505.4	476
Local	5,255	16,110	3,159	1,624	2,587	3,021	3,634	5,162	9,131	6,363

	2010-	2011-	2012-	2013-	2014-	2015-	2016-	2017-	2018-	2019-
£ MILLIONS	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
										(APR-SEPT)

authorities
in the UK

Of the loans advanced UK-wide since April 2010, the total amount of principal repaid to date is £3,653 million.

■ Wines: Excise Duties

Ben Lake: [\[293700\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of a reduction in the level of excise duty for wine on the Welsh wine industry.

Ben Lake: [\[293701\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of a reduction on excise duty for (a) gin, (b) rum and (c) whisky on the Welsh drinks industry.

Mr Simon Clarke:

All taxes are kept under review and the impact of a change to wine and spirits duty is considered at each fiscal event, including their effect on specific industries and the wider economy.

■ Women in Finance Charter

Rachael Maskell: [\[293647\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many organisations in (a) Yorkshire and the Humber, (b) London and (c) the UK have signed up to the Women in Finance Charter; and how many workers in each such area are covered under that Charter.

John Glen:

HM Treasury's Women in Finance Charter reflects our ambition to see an improved gender balance in the financial services industry. Charter signatories have committed to implement strategic actions to improve their gender balance at a senior level.

To date, over 350 financial services firms have signed the Charter, covering over 800,000 people. Of these, around two thirds of signatories have headquarters in London and around one third have headquarters elsewhere in the UK.

We only hold information on the location of each signatory's headquarters and so we are unable to provide an estimate of how many workers in each area are covered by the Charter. For example, some of the signatory organisations headquartered in London will have locations in other areas of the country. Of the over 1 million people employed in the financial and insurance sector in the UK, 63% work outside London.

Our second annual review of the Women in Finance Charter was published on 14 March 2019 and demonstrated that 72% of signatories had increased the proportion of women in senior management over that period. Firms who have been signed up for two years made more progress in the second year than in the first. We are in the process of gathering data for the third annual review which I hope will show further progress.

WALES

■ Economic Situation: Wales

Ruth Jones:

[\[292385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on the Wales economy of the UK leaving EU without a deal.

Alun Cairns:

The UK Government's preferred position is to leave the EU with a deal that works for Wales.

In the event of no-deal, the Government would of course take economic measures to mitigate any short-run disruption, support the economy through the transition, and to boost the long-term potential of the Welsh economy. The Welsh economy approaches EU exit from a strong position, unemployment is down and the employment rate has reached a record high.

■ Rural Development Programme: Wales

Jo Stevens:

[\[292937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how his Department plans to support new programmes that would have been eligible for Rural Development Programme funding after 31 October 2019.

Alun Cairns:

The Government has guaranteed that any Rural Development Programme projects where funding has been agreed before the end of 2020 will be funded for their full lifetime. It will ensure continued funding for these projects until they finish and means that new projects can continue to be signed off by the Welsh Government in Wales after the UK leaves the EU during 2019 and 2020.

■ Wales Office: Chief Scientific Advisers

Norman Lamb:

[\[292158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many meetings he had with his Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

Alun Cairns:

None. The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales does not have a Chief Scientific Adviser.

■ Wales Office: Crispin Odey**David Linden:** [\[292352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will publish (a) the outcome of all meetings and (b) all call logs between Ministers of his Department and Mr Crispin Odey.

Alun Cairns:

Details of Ministers' meetings are published quarterly in arrears on GOV.UK.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Candidates: Females****Ian Lavery:** [\[293589\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to encourage more women to seek elected office.

Victoria Atkins:

We are clear that Parliament must be representative, and that it is for parties to ensure that they select a diverse range of candidates, and that their selection processes are responsive to known barriers.

However, the Suffrage Centenary Fund supported around 320 projects across the country including events encouraging nearly 800 women to stand for election, creating a pipeline of talent ready to enter public life. The Fund also provides a valuable model for further consideration of Government action in the future.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Ethnic Groups****Chris Stephens:** [\[292940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of staff who applied for promotion within her Department from 1 September 2018 to 1 September 2019 and who identified as (a) BAME and (b) White were successful by each grade in her Department.

Mims Davies:

The Departmental recruitment and promotion exercises are delivered through the Government Recruitment Service (GRS) which is part of Cabinet Office, therefore the Department does not hold the information you have requested of those staff that have applied on promotion or those who have been successfully promoted. The Department is committed to increasing its diversity and inclusivity and does receive and analyse recruitment statistics information from GRS but this data does not distinguish between internal and external candidates.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Official Hospitality

Ruth Jones:

[\[292430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department spent on refreshments in (a) 2017 and (b) 2018.

Mims Davies:

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

■ Employment: Disability

Paul Farrelly:

[\[292853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help businesses increase access for disabled people to (a) apprenticeships and (b) jobs.

Justin Tomlinson:

In respect of apprenticeships, we have undertaken a number of actions to improve access to apprenticeships for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We have made British Sign Language (BSL) an alternative to English Functional Skills for those who have BSL as their first language and we have adjusted the minimum English and maths requirements for those who are able to meet the occupational standard of their apprenticeship but would struggle to achieve the regular English and maths minimum requirements.

It is encouraging to see that 36,900 apprenticeships were started by individuals with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the first three quarters of 2018/9. This is 12.3 per cent of all apprenticeship starts and an increase from 11.5 per cent at the same point in 2017/18.

We continue our work with Mencap and our Pacesetters group, made up of a range of organisations and local authorities to identify what further support we can give those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

With regard to jobs help, we offer a range of programmes and schemes that offer employment support to disabled people. These include:

- the Work and Health Programme (WHP), which will help 275,000 people over 5 years, including 220,000 disabled people.
- The Disability Confident scheme. Through this, we work with employers to change attitudes and create employment opportunities by giving businesses the tools and techniques to recruit and retain disabled people in their workplace. Over 13,600 employers are signed up to Disability Confident, and their number continues to grow.
- Access to Work, which offers eligible disabled people a grant of up to £59,200 per year to fund support above the level of reasonable adjustments, to ensure that their health condition or disability does not hold them back in the workplace. Last year

we spent £129 million on Access to Work grants, helping over 36,000 people stay in employment.

The Intensive Personalised Employment Support Programme (IPES) will launch by the end of 2019. It will provide highly personalised packages of employment support for disabled people with complex and multiple barriers to work who are at least a year away from moving into work without the support on the programme.

Our Jobcentres offer tailored and personalised support from Work Coaches and Disability Employment Advisers, backed by the Personal Support Package which is a 4-year, £330 million package of employment support targeted at claimants with disabilities and health conditions.

■ Money and Pensions Service

Steve McCabe:

[\[292823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much funding the Money and Pensions Service will receive in 2019.

Guy Opperman:

Funding for Money and Pension Service is shown in the Central Government Supply Estimates (19/20). Page 156 shows funding of £125.6m for the Single Financial Guidance Body which was later renamed Money and Pension Service.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800671/main_estimates_2019-20_web.pdf

■ Occupational Pensions

Stephen Doughty:

[\[292247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the financial assistance scheme for pensioners affected by occupational pension scheme losses.

Guy Opperman:

The Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), which is administered by the Pensions Protection Fund (PPF) on behalf of DWP, was set up in 2005 with assistance payments backdated to May 2004 when the policy of the FAS was announced. Prior to the establishment of the FAS, employees received vastly reduced benefits from pension schemes in difficulty and sometimes nothing at all, irrespective of the contributions they had made.

£400 million of public funding over 20 years was initially committed to the FAS which helped an estimated 15,000 people. The support available to members of FAS has subsequently been extended over the years and, as a consequence, the level of Government funding of the scheme has increased significantly bringing the Government's total long-term cash expenditure on the scheme to £8.6 billion.

The FAS closed to notification and qualification of new schemes on 1 September 2016 but will continue to support its 150,000 members who will continue to receive a meaningful income for the rest of their lives.

The Government remains committed to the principle of providing protection for members of pension schemes in the event of employer insolvency via the PPF.

■ Occupational Pensions: Advisory Services

Steve McCabe:

[\[292822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much funding was allocated to (a) the Money Advice Service, (b) the Pensions Advisory Service and (c) Pension Wise in each of the five years up to and including 2018.

Guy Opperman:

The Money Advice Service was previously an HMT sponsored levy funded arm's length body. When this and the other legacy bodies were merged to create the Money and Pensions Service (formerly Single Financial Guidance Body) historic budgets were transferred to the new Government sponsors - Department for Work and Pensions - as part of a Machinery of Government change. The historic amounts transferred to DWP were:

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
£79.8m	£80.5m	£79.4m	£76.3m	£79.6m	£82.1m

Funding for the Pension Advisory Service is contained in the Supplementary Estimates for each year hosted on the link below. The data can be found in Part III: Note E of the Department for Work and Pensions section. The Pension Advisory Service is Levy funded.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-supplementary-estimates>

Pension Wise costs for the Period are:

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
N/A	N/A*	£31.7m**	£24.4m	£18.1m	£16.9m***

*Pension Wise was in set up phase in 14/15

** Pension Wise was in HMT in 15/16

*** Includes Pension Wise expenditure in DWP and Single Finance Guidance Body (now Money & Pensions Service)

Pension Wise is levy funded.

■ Occupational Pensions: Birmingham Hodge Hill**Liam Byrne:****[293477]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in the Birmingham, Hodge Hill constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled into a workplace pension and (b) saved more than the auto-enrolment minimum contribution.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving, and reversing the decline in workplace pension participation in the decade prior to these reforms. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as of August 2019.

In the Birmingham, Hodge Hill constituency, since 2012, approximately 6,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 1,360 employers have met their duties.

Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

The Pensions Regulator's data on Automatic enrolment declaration of compliance by constituency, available via the following weblink:
<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

■ Occupational Pensions: Canterbury**Rosie Duffield:****[293697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in Canterbury constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled and (b) saved more than the auto-enrolment minimum contribution in a workplace pension.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving, and reversing the decline in workplace pension participation in the decade prior to these reforms. Since automatic enrolment started

in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as of August 2019:

In the Canterbury constituency, since 2012, approximately 11,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 1,830 employers have met their duties.

Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

■ Occupational Pensions: Stoke-on-Trent North

Ruth Smeeth:

[293668]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in Stoke-on-Trent North constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled into a workplace pension and (b) saved more than the auto-enrolment minimum contribution.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving, and reversing the decline in workplace pension participation in the decade prior to these reforms. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as of August 2019:

In the Stoke-on-Trent North constituency, since 2012, approximately 6,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 1,250 employers have met their duties.

Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

■ Pension Funds

Henry Smith:

[292199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure pension funds consider the impact of climate change when taking investment decisions.

Guy Opperman:

The Government recognises that climate change is a defining national and international emergency, and we have introduced three key measures to ensure that pension schemes understand their responsibilities in responding to it.

Firstly, since January 2019 those running single employer occupational pension schemes have been required to establish an effective system of governance including consideration of environmental, social and governance factors related to investment assets in investment decisions.

Secondly, also since January 2019 schemes with 100 or more members must carry out and document a risk assessment of their system of governance including risks relating to climate change, the use of resources and the environment and risks relating to the depreciation of assets as a result of regulatory change (known as transition risk).

Thirdly, as of 1st October, trustees of occupational pension schemes must state their policy on how they take account of the financial risks of climate change when developing their investment strategies. Defined contribution pension schemes are also required to publish their policy online.

As the Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion I have spoken extensively about the new requirements and made clear this Government's expectations of pension schemes.

■ Pensioners: EU Countries

Tom Brake:

[293412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many UK Pensioners residing in the EU would not receive an up-rated pension after 2022-23 in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Guy Opperman:

The Government has been clear that leaving the EU with a deal is its preferred option.

The Government has put in place contingency plans for a range of exit scenarios. These contingencies ensure that DWP can continue to provide our vital services and

that individuals will continue to be able to access DWP benefits and services on the same basis as they do now.

In the event that the UK exits the EU without a deal we will continue to pay annual increases for UK State Pension recipients living in the EEA for a further three years, until 2022-23. We plan to negotiate an agreement with the EU to continue to pay increases in the longer term.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Alison McGovern:

[292906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people of pensionable age receiving personal independence payments have been sent a notification requiring them to reapply for that benefit.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

From 31st May 2019, new claimants to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) whose award would otherwise have had a review after they had reached State Pension age, have been receiving an ongoing award and will be subject to a light touch review at 10 years. From 9th July this year, we also began moving existing PIP claimants with a scheduled review after they have reached state pension age onto ongoing awards with a light touch review after 10 years. For these existing claimants, changes to their award duration are taking place prior to their scheduled award review. This means that claimants who we identify as benefiting from the change will not be sent a review form or undergo a review or further assessment until the 10-year light touch point is reached.

■ Poverty: Children

Ruth Jones:

[292338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of child poverty.

Will Quince:

National statistics on the number of children in relative and absolute low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" publication available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789816/hbai-2017-2018-tables-ods-files.zip

In the latest low income statistics, the number of children in low income increased in three of the four measures.

Since 2009/2010 there has been a 1 percentage point reduction in child poverty on an absolute before housing cost (BHC) basis.

The evidence shows that work is the best route out of poverty and there are 730,000 fewer children in workless households compared with 2010.

■ Poverty: Females**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[293446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of women and girls living below the poverty line.

Will Quince:

National Statistics on the number of children in relative and absolute low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" (HBAI) publication.

In the latest low income statistics, the number of women (including those of pension age) and female children below the poverty line decreased in three out of four measures compared to 2009/10. In 2017/18 there were 3.8 million women in absolute poverty before housing costs, down from 3.9 million in 2009/10. In 2017/18 there were 1.2 million female children in poverty in absolute poverty before housing costs, down from 1.3 million in 2009/10.

The above information has been sourced from the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) statistics using Stat-Xplore. Stat-Xplore can be accessed using:
<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

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

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

■ Social Security Benefits**Heidi Allen:****[292317]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of establishing an independent commission to review the value of benefits to ensure they consistently match the cost of living.

Will Quince:

The Secretary of State has a statutory duty to complete an annual review of benefit and pension rates to determine whether they have retained their value in relation to either prices or earnings.

If there has been an increase in prices or earnings she must increase certain benefits by at least the increase in prices or earnings, using ONS data. For other benefits she may take into account the prevailing economic conditions and other relevant factors.

Whilst organisations external to Government are free to make representations to the Secretary of State, the Department has made no assessment around the introduction of an independent commission to review the value of benefits.

Ruth Jones:**[292336]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of (a) sanctions and (b) conditionality on the (i) health and well-being of claimants and (ii) the ability of claimants to enter employment.

Mims Davies:

Evidence from international studies indicates that benefit systems supported by conditionality are effective at moving people into work and that sanctions are a key part of conditionality. Transitions into work typically increase following a sanction.

The Department has committed to doing an evaluation of the effectiveness of Universal Credit sanctions at supporting claimants to search for work in response to the Work and Pensions Select Committee's report on benefit sanctions. The Department will look to publish this by the end of 2019.

With regards to health and well-being, the Department has not made such assessment. We engage at a personal and individual level with all claimants; Legislation already enables work coaches to tailor conditionality, apply easements, set 'voluntary' work-related requirements (therefore, there is no risk of a sanction) or even switch off work-related requirements altogether where it is more appropriate for the individual, in light of their circumstances, including health conditions or disability.

■ Social Security Benefits: Chronic Illnesses and Disability**Sarah Newton:**[\[292898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on creating a single assessment service for benefits claimants who are disabled or have long-term health conditions.

Justin Tomlinson:

We announced in March 2019 that we have launched the Health Transformation Programme to deliver a new integrated assessment service across all health and disability benefits. This will make the assessment process simpler, quicker, more user-friendly and more joined-up whichever benefit people are claiming. This integrated service will still be taking applications to individual benefits on a separate basis.

Alongside this work, we are also undertaking a feasibility study to explore whether a single assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) would further improve the experience for the small number of people who apply for PIP and benefits requiring a WCA at the same time. The study is being informed by existing evidence and we have been gathering views and insight from key stakeholders including healthcare professionals to understand the issues around feasibility.

■ Social Security Benefits: Eligibility**Dr David Drew:**[\[293432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 290603, what support is available to people who would otherwise be eligible for benefits and who are undergoing long-term hospital care to pay for (a) mortgages, (b) rents and (c) other personal and care charges to help ensure that they do not lose their unit of accommodation while in NHS-funded care.

Justin Tomlinson:

It is a long standing principle that there should not be double provision for the same contingency out of public funds. Legislation provides that where any costs of qualifying services are borne out of public funds the disability benefits (Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment) are withdrawn after 28 days.

Certain additions are payable on top of income-related benefits, such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, and Universal Credit. Housing costs in legacy benefits and Universal Credit are withdrawn after an adult has been a hospital in-patient for a specified period depending on their individual circumstances.

Housing Benefit can remain in payment up to 52 weeks, for people who are hospitalised, as long as they intend to return to their normal dwelling and it has not been sublet during their absence.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Wirral****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[292839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many advance benefit payments were made to people in (a) Wallasey constituency and (b) Wirral in each of the last 12 months.

Will Quince:

The table below gives the number of advances paid for the Wallasey constituency and the Wirral local authority.

	WALLASEY CONSTITUENCY	WIRRAL LOCAL AUTHORITY
Jun-18	360	1,200
Jul-18	480	1,530
Aug-18	450	1,410
Sep-18	380	1,280
Oct-18	410	1,350
Nov-18	410	1,370
Dec-18	290	1,040
Jan-19	390	1,340
Feb-19	430	1,370
Mar-19	490	1,480
Apr-19	490	1,490

	WALLASEY CONSTITUENCY	WIRRAL LOCAL AUTHORITY
May-19	590	1,780

Notes

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Figures include all types of advances.

Figures relate to Universal Credit full service only.

■ Television: Licensing

Ms Angela Eagle:

[\[292838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost to the public purse was of providing free television licences to people over the age of 75 for qualifying residents in (a) Wallasey constituency, (b) Merseyside and (c) the North West in 2018-19.

Guy Opperman:

In the 2015 funding settlement, the Government agreed with the BBC that responsibility for the concession will transfer to the BBC in June 2020.

On 10 June 2019, the BBC announced that the current scheme will end. From 1 June 2020, a free TV licence will only be available to a household with someone aged over 75 who receives Pension Credit.

The cost to the public purse for providing free TV licences to those aged over 75 in the North West region in 2018/19 is estimated as £52m. Unlike in previous years, in 2018/19 free TV licences for those aged 75 and over were *partially* funded by DWP as agreed at the 2015 funding settlement and leading to the BBC taking responsibility for funding and policy from June 2020. The figure of £52m is the DWP's share only, not the total expenditure.

The table below provides estimates of the costs and caseloads for 2017/18 of providing free TV licences to people aged 75 years and over in Wallasey constituency and Merseyside local authority.

The most recent figures available for parliamentary constituency and local authority are for 2017/18. Figures for 2018/19 will be available later this month.

	EXPENDITURE (£M) (NOMINAL)
	2017-18
(a) Wallasey constituency	£1.0
(b) Merseysidemetropolitan county	£14.9

■ Universal Credit**Heidi Allen:****[292316]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of backdating universal credit payments to reduce the five week wait for a first payment.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit new claim advances provide access to a payment for those in financial need, which can be accessed urgently, until their first regular Universal Credit payment is due. Claimants can access up to 100% of the total expected monthly award, which they can pay back over a period of up to 12 months. We have announced that from October 2021, the repayment period for these advances will be extended further, to 16 months.

The Department has delivered a number of improvements to support claimants during their first assessment period, such as removing waiting days and paying those claimants moving from Housing Benefit onto Universal Credit a two week 'transitional housing payment'. We are also introducing a two-week run on for eligible claimants of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance from July 2020.

Claims may be backdated, by up to one calendar month, in limited circumstances for vulnerable claimants who may be delayed in claiming Universal Credit through no fault of their own. Claims may also be backdated in specific circumstances when a couple separates to ensure that there is no gap in entitlement between the couple claim and the new claim made by a single claimant.

Heidi Allen:**[292318]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit payments were subject to a deduction for child maintenance arrears.

Will Quince:

For eligible Universal Credit claims with a payment due in May 2019 (the latest month of available data) 0.6% [11,000 claims] had a deduction for child maintenance arrears.

Notes

- Number of claims rounded to nearest 1000.
- Percentage rounded to nearest 0.1%

Ruth Jones:**[292337]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effect of the roll-out of universal credit on trends in the level of referrals to food banks.

Will Quince:

The Department does not keep official statistics on food bank use, so no such assessment has been completed. Some food aid providers produce statistics on the number of food parcels distributed, but the Government has no plans to require individual food banks to keep records as this would place a significant burden on charitable and voluntary organisations.

We have listened to feedback on how we can improve Universal Credit to support our claimants and acted quickly, making improvements such as extending advances, removing waiting days, and introducing housing benefit run on. These changes are giving support to vulnerable people who need it most, whilst at the same time helping people get into work faster.

Stephen Timms:[\[292792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support (a) claimants with cancer and (b) other vulnerable claimants applying for universal credit.

Stephen Timms:[\[292793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that home visits for universal credit applications are offered to (a) claimants with cancer and (b) other vulnerable claimants.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department takes seriously the need to support vulnerable claimants. The initial verification can include a home visit to support a claimant with making their claim and completing any other administrative tasks required to ensure that they receive the correct payment.

We want the application process for Universal Credit to be as quick and easy as possible to ensure that claimants receive their money at the earliest opportunity.

This is why Citizen's Advice and Citizen's Advice Scotland have been delivering the 'Help to Claim' service, supporting claimants with making a new claim to Universal Credit. The Citizens Advice Help to Claim service offers tailored, practical support to help people make a Universal Credit claim up to receiving their first full correct payment on time, and is available online, on the phone and face-to-face through local Citizen's Advice services.

Staff delivering Universal Credit undergo a comprehensive learning journey designed to equip them with the tools, skills and behaviours required to provide a high quality service to all claimants, including those who have cancer and other health conditions.

As we continue to deliver Universal Credit, with its expanded claimant base, we are continuing to review and further develop the customer journey for claimants with complex needs, including how we support claimants with health conditions to engage in the process.

Stephen Timms:[\[292795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the reasons for differing rates of home visits to universal credit applicants in different geographical areas; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

Home visits are available to support claimants in making and maintaining their Universal Credit claims. No assessment has been made regarding the differing rates of home visits in different geographical areas as home visits are given based solely on the circumstances of the claimant.

To ensure all claimants are supported, the Department has allocated additional funding for the home visiting service. This year we have allocated £1 million of funding for the home visiting service. For 2019/20 the total fund allocated will rise to just under £2 million, and will continue to increase to over £5.5 million per year by 2023/24, reflecting the increase in the total number of claimants of Universal Credit whether through managed migration or from other sources.

Steve McCabe:[\[293439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of October 1 to Question 290635 on universal credit, what evidence her Department used to reduce the repayment level from 40 per cent to 30 per cent of universal credit award.

Will Quince:

The Department collects and analyses data on Universal Credit regularly, including on the rate of deductions. Alongside this, the Department is always building our understanding on the impact deductions can have on claimants, and has heard evidence from external organisations on this issue. We have to balance these impacts with the need for claimants to meet their obligations.

We believe the reduction from 40 percent to 30 percent strikes a fair balance between a claimant's need to make essential repayments and their ability to ensure they can meet their day-to-day needs. It maintains our policy to enforce social obligations such as the payment of fines and Child Maintenance, ensure Government debt is recovered and vitally to safeguard claimants from the potential impacts of not repaying priority debts, such as homelessness or the deduction of fuel.

Ruth Smeeth:[\[293665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking with representatives of Paypoint UK to ensure that universal credit claimants without access to a bank account receive their entitlement without delay.

Guy Opperman:

The Department's standard method of payment for pensions and benefits is to pay into a bank account, building society account, credit union account, internet based account or a basic bank account of the customer's choice. For claimants who cannot open or manage one of these accounts, or provide the details for their own account to access their payment, the Department can offer two payment exception methods:

The Post Office Card Account (POCa) and HM Government Payment Exception Service (HMG PES). These payment exception methods ensure that claimants can receive their entitlement on time via the Post Office network (POCa) or PayPoint outlet.

The HMG PES provider is I-movo Limited. I-movo subcontracts the delivery of its counter services to Paypoint UK which operates a contact centre and a complaints process. These provisions enable complaints to be logged and monitored should anyone have cause to complain about the service received at a PayPoint location. All complaints are recorded and monitored through to successful resolution.

■ Universal Credit: Appeals

Martyn Day:

[293654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost was to her Department of universal credit appeals which over-turned the decision of her Department over the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Working Age Benefits

Heidi Allen:

[292319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the working age benefit freeze on the household incomes of people with (a) disabilities and (b) long term health conditions.

Justin Tomlinson:

An Impact Assessment of the benefit freeze was published in 2015, this is available in the link below.

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA15-006C.pdf>

This benefit freeze excluded Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, the Support Group component of Employment and Support Allowance (for those not expected to look for work), disability premia in working-age benefits and the disabled elements of tax credits. This provides protection for those facing the additional cost of disability and long term health conditions.