



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 17 October 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 17 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Finance

Tom Brake: [\[16\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the the £15 million Brexit readiness fund has been disbursed to businesses; and in which sectors those businesses were.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Business Readiness Fund was set up to help to prepare businesses for leaving the EU on 31 October. £10.4M has been approved across 133 successful bids, with just under £8M already paid to Business Representative Organisations. Applications have spanned a wide range of sectors (including manufacturing, retail and life sciences) and are from across the UK, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

■ Electricity Generation

Nic Dakin: [\[140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how the Government plans to meet the projected shortfall in electricity supply by 2050 while achieving net zero-emissions targets; what changes to Government policy will be required; what energy mix will provide the best value for money for the taxpayer to meet that shortfall; and how much of that growth in electricity output will come from onshore wind power.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

This Government is committed to delivering net zero emissions by 2050 which will require significant effort in all sectors. We are currently considering next steps in the light of the recent commitment to net zero. In power, we have made great progress in decarbonising electricity generation whilst meeting demand, and over half our electricity generation was from low-carbon sources last year, up from 23% in 2010.

As we continue to reduce emissions the exact mix of the electricity system will be affected by the approach to decarbonisation in other sectors, technology costs and the emergence of new technologies. It is not for government to prescribe the proportion of generation that will come from any specific technology in 2050; rather the role of government will be to enable the market to deliver the levels of deployment required whilst minimising both emissions and systems costs.

A diverse mix is likely to be required. We agree with the CCC Net Zero report that the falling cost of renewables means that they are likely to provide the majority of capacity in any low cost, low carbon system. Renewable generation would be complimented with firm low-carbon generation provided from sources such as nuclear

and gas or biomass generation with carbon capture, usage and storage. In addition, we expect to see a significant increase in the levels of flexibility and storage in the electricity system.

We will be setting out our more detailed plans in due course in a future White Paper.

■ Electricity: Northern Ireland

Tom Brake: [\[19\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of Northern Ireland remaining in the Single Electricity Market on the UK's membership of the European Court of Justice.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Maintaining security of electricity supply in Northern Ireland is a priority for this Government. We have undertaken significant work, and prepared legislation, in order to ensure that technical, operational and legal arrangements are in place to seek to maintain the Single Electricity Market whatever the circumstances. We recognise the need to have in place a common set of rules across the Single Electricity Market that govern the arrangement. The exact nature of these is still to be agreed as part of the negotiations.

Once the UK leaves the EU it will no longer participate in or contribute to the EU institutions including the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Only Member States of the EU can nominate candidates to be appointed as judges in the CJEU.

■ Energy: Meters

Catherine West: [\[303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to help ensure households that (a) don't want and (b) are unable to have a smart meter installed can access the cheapest available energy deals.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Customers with smart meters are cheaper to serve for energy suppliers, and the Government expects the associated savings to be passed on. We are already seeing some suppliers offering cheaper tariffs for customers with smart meters or those that agree to have them installed.

The Government has acted to protect consumers regardless of meter type. That is why we introduced a market cap on energy prices which protects up to 11 million households on standard variable and default tariffs, in addition to the 4 million households protected by Ofgem's Safeguard Tariff cap.

■ Fracking

Chi Onwurah:

[\[259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of physical damage caused by hydraulic fracking on the (a) cost and (b) availability of home insurance for residents near that damage.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department has not undertaken such assessments. As part of the assessment of an application for hydraulic fracturing operations, the Oil & Gas Authority (OGA) requires operators to have in place the necessary funds or an insurance policy (including third-party liability) that will cover unforeseen events. In addition to insurance cover, landowners can bring a claim against a shale gas operator if its activities caused damage to their property.

Hydraulic fracturing has taken place at two sites in Lancashire to date. Following a seismic event linked to Cuadrilla's operations on 26 August a small number of reports of minor cosmetic damage have been investigated by the operator's insurer and this is a matter for the operator and homeowners.

The Government has always been clear that it will only support the exploration of our shale gas resources in a safe and sustainable way. The Oil and Gas Authority is undertaking a scientific analysis of the data from Cuadrilla's earlier operations in 2018 which will be published shortly. The Government will set out our future approach once we have considered the findings.

■ Fracking: Earthquakes

Thelma Walker:

[\[702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her Department has plans to review the traffic light system limits on seismic disturbance.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has always been clear that it will only support the exploration of our shale gas resources in a safe and sustainable way. The Oil and Gas Authority is undertaking a scientific analysis of the data from Cuadrilla's earlier operations in 2018 which will be published shortly. The Government will set out our future approach once we have considered the findings.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Alex Chalk:

[\[349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to reduce household carbon emissions through the use of hydrogen as a replacement for gas.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Burning natural gas for heating accounts for a significant proportion of household carbon emissions. There is currently no clear consensus on the best approach to decarbonising heat at scale, and our December 2018 report on Clean Growth: Transforming Heating set out that using hydrogen as a replacement for natural gas, including for domestic heating, may play an important role.

Further work is required to better understand the potential for using hydrogen to replace natural gas in parts of the gas grid. Several projects relevant to this are currently underway. These include projects run by gas network operators, and the £25m BEIS-funded Hy4Heat programme, which is investigating the feasibility of using hydrogen for heating in residential and commercial buildings.

The Government has committed to publishing a Heat Policy Roadmap in mid-2020, setting out the next steps on heat decarbonisation.

■ Insolvency**Stephen Morgan:****[317]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department is taking to support people seeking to retrieve financial earnings from (a) Thomas Cook and (b) other organisations that have gone into compulsory liquidation.

Kelly Tolhurst:

In an insolvent situation, the Government steps in to offer a level of protection to employees who would otherwise receive nothing from their insolvent employer. Payments are made by the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service within certain statutory limits.

- a) A specialist team was set up to process the high volume of redundancy claims from former Thomas Cook employees to ensure payments were received as quickly as possible.
- b) Where claims are received from former employees of companies in compulsory liquidation, the Redundancy Payments Service pays on average within 14 days of receipt of information from the employee.

Stephen Morgan:**[318]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that people who have (a) uncollected holiday pay and (b) uncollected time off in lieu can access their earnings from (a) Thomas Cook and (b) other organisations that have gone into compulsory liquidation.

Kelly Tolhurst:

In the event an employer becomes insolvent, the Government steps in to offer a level of protection to employees who would otherwise receive nothing from their former employer. Payments, including holiday pay and pay in lieu of notice, are made by the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service subject to conditions and statutory limits.

a) In respect of Thomas Cook employees, a specialist team was set up to process the high volume of redundancy related claims from former employees to ensure payments were received as quickly as possible.

b) Where claims are received from former employees of companies in compulsory liquidation, the Redundancy Payments Service pays on average within 14 days of receipt of information.

■ **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[80\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the share of the miners' pension scheme's surplus that goes to former miners.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government does not intend to change the current surplus-sharing arrangements that have worked well for all parties. Instead, we are considering the Trustees' proposals for changes to the scheme that include protection of bonuses already accrued and hope to reach agreement shortly. We will update the House in due course.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions she has had with representatives from the UK automotive sector on the potential effect on car production levels of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are working closely with businesses across the country to help ensure they are prepared for the UK leaving the EU on the 31st October, whatever the circumstances. This includes regular engagement with the automotive industry by both BEIS ministers and officials to discuss plans for no-deal.

All Ministerial meetings with external stakeholders are published in Quarterly Transparency returns published by relevant Departments.

■ **New Businesses: Females**

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[900037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the reasons for the national gender gap among entrepreneurs.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship, published in March, identified key barriers that lead to lower rates of entrepreneurship among women, including low access to finance, and lack of mentoring and networks.

In response, Government has set the goal to increase the number of female entrepreneurs by half by 2030, equivalent to nearly 600,000 new entrepreneurs.

■ **Post Offices: Liverpool**

Dame Louise Ellman: [53]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her Department has had discussions with Post Office Limited on the future of the Crown post office in Dingle, Liverpool; and if she will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK. This is why the Government committed to safeguard the Post Office Network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. Although the future of each branch is an operational matter for Post Office Limited, the Department has had previous discussions with Post Office Limited regarding the future of the Crown post office in Dingle, Liverpool. Post Office Limited has assured the Department that they are wholeheartedly committed to serving the community in Dingle and they are currently considering all the options available to maintain access to Post Office services when the current contract comes to an end on 4 December 2019.

I have therefore asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the hon Member to provide further information on this matter. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ **Sahaviriya Steel Industries UK: Tees Valley**

Ms Lisa Forbes: [373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding from the public purse has been allocated to the SSI Task Force since the closure of SSI by programme; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the SSI Task Force in supporting (a) former employees and (b) the economy in the Tees Valley area following the collapse of SSI.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The SSI Task Force was set up in 2015 to support impacted workers after the liquidation of the company. We are working with the Task Force and Tees Valley Combined Authority on an evaluation of the economic impact on both affected workers and the local economy. This will be published shortly. Progress reports for the Task Force are available at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/SSITaskForce.

■ Thomas Cook: Insolvency

Ms Lisa Forbes: [\[372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will request that the liquidator of Thomas Cook does not contest protective award claims from employees of the company.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Official Receiver was appointed as liquidator of the Thomas Cook group of companies by the court and, as liquidator, the Official Receiver acts as an officer of the court. It will be for the Official Receiver to determine his response to any claims for protective awards from former employees made to an Employment Tribunal, taking account of the particular circumstances of the claims.

Ms Lisa Forbes: [\[374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the SSI Taskforce established following the closure of SSI, if she will establish (a) a safety net fund for areas where large numbers of Thomas Cook employees are being made redundant and (b) a business growth zone for Peterborough following the collapse of Thomas Cook.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Established in 2015, the SSI Taskforce has been responsible for delivering a range of support initiatives following the closure of the SSI steelworks in Redcar. The National Taskforce for Thomas Cook is bringing together key partners to support former employees in all parts of the UK, with regional focus at Manchester and Peterborough where many employees were based.

The Business Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, in partnership with Peterborough City Council, has developed a package of support for those affected locally which includes a dedicated advice service. This will support former employees with re-employment or with advice on starting a business of their own, and support businesses in a position to take on redundant employees.

Ms Lisa Forbes: [\[377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations she has received from Peterborough City Council for financial support following the collapse of Thomas Cook.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Business Board of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, in partnership with Peterborough City Council, has developed a package of support for those affected locally which includes a dedicated advice service. This will support former employees with re-employment or with advice on starting a business of their own, and support businesses in a position to take on redundant employees.

■ UK Research and Innovation

Stephen Metcalfe:

[221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps UKRI are taking to support interdisciplinary working in UK research.

Chris Skidmore:

UK Research and Innovation has established several mechanisms to encourage and support multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and this is a central theme in the organisation's recently published Delivery Plans. In addition to examples taking place across its Councils, UKRI supports a multibillion pound portfolio of cross-cutting funds demonstrating commitment to interdisciplinary research.

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and Future Leaders Fellowships, for example, were both designed to encourage and support interdisciplinary projects. The Strategic Priorities Fund realises Sir Paul Nurse's vision of a 'common fund' and is already investing in interdisciplinary projects that each bring together several of UKRI's councils along with government departments to tackle shared challenges and opportunities.

In addition to these targeted programmes, quality-related funding awarded by Research England allows universities and researchers in England to address their research priorities as they identify them

■ Wind Power

Philip Davies:

[122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of blades on wind turbines are (a) recycled and (b) sent to landfill at the end of their lifespan.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department does not hold this information.

Onshore windfarms are generally expected to decommission or repower from the mid 2020s onwards and offshore windfarms from the 2030s onwards.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Cabinet Office**

Norman Lamb: [\[87\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many meetings (a) members of the Cabinet and (b) their predecessors have had with EU officials in each of the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The requested information is not held centrally.

■ **Elections**

Chris Ruane: [\[57\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans his Department has to consult (a) the electoral commission, (b) the electoral reform society, (c) Bite the Ballot, (d) Operation Black Vote and (e) other third sector organisations on the Government's proposed bill on electoral integrity.

Kevin Foster:

Throughout the development of our work on electoral integrity we have consulted with a broad range of representative groups, charities and civil society organisations. We will continue consultation with all of these organisations, keeping Public Sector Equality Duty compliance at the core of our planning for the roll out of voter ID in Great Britain.

We have successfully conducted 15 local authority pilots, and will continue to work closely with the Electoral Commission and other organisations expert in the delivery of elections. We will continue to welcome the views of all stakeholders with an interest in voter ID as we take forward measures to improve the integrity and accessibility of our elections.

■ **Elections: Proof of Identity**

Jo Platt: [\[354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the application process for a local electoral identity document will be; and how identity will be verified.

Kevin Foster:

The Government will bring forward measures to introduce voter ID when parliamentary time allows.

As was the case in the 2018 and 2019 voter ID pilots, electors who do not have any of the required types of ID will be able to apply for a locally issued electoral identity document, free of charge. We will continue building on this experience and working with the pilot authorities who have tested voter ID, the Electoral Commission, and the

Cabinet Office pilot and reference group to develop a process for national implementation.

■ Government Departments: Data Protection

Chris Ruane: [74]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Government's no deal planning preparations, how many Government Departments have (a) reviewed their reliance on personal data flows from the EU and (b) developed contingency plans to mitigate risks to public sector service provision of that reliance.

Kevin Foster:

All government departments have reviewed their reliance on personal data flows from the EU and developed suitable contingency plans to mitigate risks to the public sector service provision of that reliance. Chapter three of the [No Deal Readiness Report](#) provides further information.

■ Public Sector: Databases

Jo Platt: [371]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the call for public sector application programming interfaces will include the interoperability of databases containing citizens' data.

Simon Hart:

There is an increased desire for standards and guidance for application programming interfaces (APIs) due to their increasing popularity and the benefits they offer to departments and their users. APIs are being used more frequently within government because they assist the interoperability of databases in an affordable and user-friendly way. While APIs allow interoperability to enable data sharing, in government they are programmed to only share small subsections of data or "attributes", thereby protecting identity and limiting the specific data available.

DEFENCE

■ Bahrain: Military Bases

Mr Kevan Jones: [101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times Royal Navy vessels have stopped in Bahrain since 2014; and what those vessels were.

Mark Lancaster:

The UK Naval Support Facility (UK NSF) in the Kingdom of Bahrain demonstrates our strong and enduring bilateral relationship. It supports our deployed naval force in the Gulf, providing maritime security for Bahrain, the wider region, and the global economy. The facility provides engineering and logistics support to maritime units,

and can host contingent forces for short periods. Through our presence at the UK NSF, the Royal Navy benefits from sustained use of Mina Salman Port which enables our personnel and vessels to undertake naval operations in the Gulf, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The UK maintains a long-standing maritime presence in the Gulf, currently including four Mine Counter Measure Vessels (HMS LEDBURY, HMS BLYTH, HMS SHOREHAM, and HMS BROCKLEBY), two Type 23 frigates (HMS MONTROSE, HMS KENT), two Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels (RFA CARDIGAN, RFA WAVE KNIGHT) and one Type 45 Destroyer (HMS DEFENDER). These vessels regularly use the UK NSF.

■ Defence: Industry

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[30]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support the UK defence industry.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

On 14 March, we provided an update to Parliament on our ambitious Defence Prosperity Programme which includes work to sustain an internationally competitive and productive UK Defence sector. Since the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review introduced a new National Security Objective to Promote UK Prosperity we have published strategies for Shipbuilding and Combat Air and refreshed our Defence Industrial Policy with a new emphasis on supporting growth and competitiveness.

■ Navy: Fisheries

Mr Kevan Jones:

[89]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many fishing protection vessels the UK operates; under whose jurisdiction those vessels operate; what the names are of those vessels; and how many days each of those vessels has had at sea in the last five years.

Mark Lancaster:

The Royal Navy (RN) has four River-Class Offshore Patrol Vessels that also conduct fishery protection activities alongside their Defence tasking. They are HMS MERSEY, HMS TYNE, HMS SEVERN and HMS FORTH. They are used to fulfil the RN's commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Marine Management Organisation, for fishery protection tasking.

These ships remain under RN Command.

The days spent at sea between 1 January 2014 until 30 September 2019 for all tasking; including the activity under the MOU:

SHIP	DAYS AT SEA
HMS MERSEY	1,271

SHIP	DAYS AT SEA
HMS TYNE	1,081
HMS SEVERN (1)	848
HMS FORTH (2)	268

Footnote:

1. HMS SEVERN was decommissioned in October 2017. However, as my right hon. Friend, Gavin Williamson, announced onboard HMS TYNE on 22 November 2018, the three Batch One OPV (HMS MERSEY, HMS TYNE and HMS SEVERN) will be retained for at least two years and may return to the fisheries protection task if required.
1. HMS FORTH's Vessel Acceptance Date was February 2018.

■ Nuclear Submarines: Engineers

Mr Kevan Jones:

[90]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of nuclear marine engineers the defence industry will require over the next twenty years.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Ministry of Defence is undertaking work to understand better the skills required by the Defence Nuclear Enterprise, including the requirement for Nuclear Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel. In addition, the Department, the Royal Navy and defence industry partners are members of the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group, which works collaboratively across the Defence and civil nuclear sectors to optimise nuclear skills for the future. As part of this work a Nuclear Workforce Assessment is completed; the most recent was published in 2017 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.nssguk.com/media/1316/publication-nuclear-workforce-2017-exe-summary.pdf>

■ Shipbuilding: ICT

Mr Kevan Jones:

[96]

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

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 7 October 2019 to Question 292858.

Attachments:

1. 292858 - Shipbuilding: Recruitment [292858 - Shipbuilding Recruitment.docx]

■ Shipbuilding: Recruitment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[97]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of skilled welders entering 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.

Defence is working closely with other Government Departments and industry to develop and reinvigorate the pipeline of skills for shipbuilding in the UK and to improve the industry's productivity and competitiveness. In September, the Prime Minister appointed the Defence Secretary the Shipbuilding Tsar for this Government to better realise the potential that this sector can offer across the four Home Nations and to strengthen UK shipbuilding.

■ Syria: Military Intervention

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the US decision to withdrawal militarily from north-east Syria on British military deployments in the autonomous administration of north-east Syria.

Mark Lancaster:

US troop movements have always been a matter for the US Government and not for us to comment.

With regards to the wider counter-Daesh campaign, the UK remains fully committed to the long-term security of the region and to the Global Coalition. Together, we must not lose sight of the threat that Daesh still pose in the region.

The UK and US have both made clear our deep regret at the unilateral Turkish military incursion in north east Syria and we remain in close contact.

■ Type 31 Frigates

Mr Kevan Jones:

[95]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when a decision will be made on what Government Furnished Equipment will be attached to the UK's Type 31 Frigates.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The full scope of the type of Government Furnished Equipment attached to the Type 31 frigates will be determined when the Design and Build contract is signed by the end of the year.

■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[98\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government's contract with Babcock on Type 31 Frigates contained any stipulation on which yards in the UK would conduct the work.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government announced the preferred bidder for the Type 31 General Purpose Frigate in September 2019 and looks forward to contract award in due course.

Whilst it was a mandatory requirement for the Type 31 frigates to be built and integrated in the UK, the specific build strategy to meet the Department's time and cost parameters was proposed by the Preferred Bidder as part of the Type 31 competition.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ China Global Television Network****Louise Haigh:**[\[339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when Ofcom plans to report on its investigation of whether CGTN's coverage of Hong Kong protests broke broadcasting rules.

Nigel Adams:

Broadcasting regulation is a matter for Ofcom, as the independent regulator of television and radio. The details of ongoing investigations are not shared with government, as Ofcom must be able to carry out its regulatory duties without interference.

Ofcom has stated publicly that it is currently assessing complaints against China Global Television Network. If, following an investigation, Ofcom finds its rules have been broken, it will take the necessary enforcement action.

■ Digital Technology: Procurement**Chi Onwurah:**[\[256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of creating a standardised procurement code for privately developed algorithms used in the public sector which includes mandatory human rights, data protection and equality impact assessments.

Nigel Adams:

Artificial Intelligence is a set of technologies that have the potential to greatly improve our public services by reducing costs, enhancing quality, and freeing up valuable time of frontline staff.

Recognising this, the government published the Data Ethics framework and "A Guide for using AI in the public sector" to enable public bodies to adopt AI technologies in a safe and ethical way that works for everyone in society.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Alex Norris: [\[356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to respond to the invitation of 17 June 2019 from the all-party Parliamentary group on deliberative democracy to meet that group to discuss progress on the innovation in democracy project; and if she will make a statement.

Nicky Morgan:

The Minister for Civil Society responded to the invitation on 10 September 2019, confirming that an official would attend the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deliberative Democracy.

■ **Political Parties: Advertising**

Paul Farrelly: [\[51\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to create a regulator for online political advertising.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has committed to implementing an imprints regime for digital election material. Our aim is to increase transparency and allow voters to see more information about who has produced election material. We will publish the technical proposals for this regime later this year.

The Cabinet Office is also preparing to launch a consultation on electoral integrity. The scope of this may include increased transparency on digital political advertising; closing loopholes on foreign spending in elections; preventing shell companies from sidestepping current rules on political finance; and action to tackle foreign lobbying. More detail will be brought forward in due course.

In addition, in February this year the Government announced its intention to lead a review of how online advertising is regulated in the UK. This review will identify and address the systematic social and economic challenges that arise from the sector.

■ **Twitter: Harassment**

Ian Austin: [\[132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 294113, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) racism, (b) abuse and (c) threats on Twitter.

Matt Warman:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer to PQ 294113 from 8 October 2019.

Ian Austin: [\[133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 294112, what discussions she has had with representatives from Twitter on anonymous abuse and threats on that platform.

Matt Warman:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer to PQ 294112 from 8 October 2019.

Ian Austin: [\[134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 294114, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of Twitter in dealing with abuse and threats made on that platform.

Matt Warman:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer to PQ 294114 from 8 October 2019.

Ian Austin: [\[135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Twitter's rules in curbing harmful content and abuse.

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. This will make companies more responsible for their users' safety online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator.

The regulator will publish codes of practice, which will set out in detail the steps that companies should take to fulfill their duty of care. We envisage that, where relevant, companies will ensure their terms and conditions meet standards set by the regulator and reflect the codes of practice as appropriate. Relevant terms and conditions will be required to be sufficiently clear and accessible, including to children and other vulnerable users. The regulator will assess how effectively these terms are enforced as part of any regulatory action.

Ahead of the implementation of the new regulatory framework, we continue to encourage companies to take early action to address online harms.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption: Disability

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[32\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to support children with disabilities (a) before and (b) after they are adopted.

Michelle Donelan:

Our ambition is for every child, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life. We introduced Education, Health and Care plans to provide personalised and tailored support for those children with more complex needs and have also announced £780 million additional funding in 2020-21, bringing the total funding for high needs to £7.2 billion.

All children who were adopted, including children with disabilities, are also entitled to access the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) which can pay for essential therapeutic services. The ASF aims to ensure that these families receive good, timely support. Adopted children also attract Pupil Premium Plus funding of £2,300 per pupil for their schools, which can be used to support their educational outcomes.

■ Adoption: Ethnic Groups**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[31]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to encourage the adoption of children (a) from BAME backgrounds and (b) over the age of five.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has invested £645,000 to boost adoption recruitment during 2019-20. We have funded the sector through the National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group, which has run both the National Adoption Week campaign and wider recruitment projects to target potential adopters in their areas for the children they have waiting. This will include children from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and children over the age of 5. Part of this work has included work with churches and mosques to encourage adopters from a range of different backgrounds.

We are commissioning behavioural insights research to better understand the motivations and barriers for people who are interested in becoming foster carers or adopters. This piece of work is focused on wider recruitment but should give us insight into how we better engage adopters for children who are harder to place.

In addition, at a recent No 10 roundtable, I gave commitments that the department will be:

- Exploring through the Adoption & Special Guardianship Leadership Board decision making at Local Authority level and reported barriers to BAME families becoming adopters;
- Reviewing how we can improve support in schools and in particular how designated teachers for adopted children and Virtual School Heads can best support adopted BAME children;
- Improving working with BAME stakeholders, to ensure their viewpoints are included in policy development and implementation;

- Asking Regional Adoption Agencies to create a national BAME recruitment strategy in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the voluntary sector organisation Homes for Good; and
- Considering how best to ensure all their frontline social workers understand the law and are supportive of BAME families coming forward to adopt.

■ Apprentices

Justin Madders:

[327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Individualised Learner Record, how many apprenticeship starts there were in 2017-18 (a) by apprentices who were (i) under 25 years old and (ii) over 25 years old and (b) apprenticeship level in each by (A) participation of local areas (POLAR) quintile and (B) eligibility for free school meals.

Michelle Donelan:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The department does not hold information on the Individualised Learner Record for apprenticeship starts by participation of local area quintiles (POLAR). However, a publication by the Office for Students published data for 2016/17 on the proportion of apprenticeship starts from POLAR quintiles by apprenticeship level. This publication can be found at the following link: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/analysis-of-degree-apprenticeships/disadvantage/>.

The department also does not hold a measure to allow us to publish apprenticeship starts by eligibility for free school meals but does publish apprenticeship starts by indices of multiple deprivation quintile, and by level and age band. This data can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765589/Index_of_Multiple_Deprivation_201516_to_201718.xlsx.

Apprenticeship starts by age group and apprenticeship level for the 2017/18 academic year are published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-july-2019>.

■ Children: Day Care

Stephen McPartland:

[139]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will extend the free childcare entitlement to the equivalent of 30 hours a week for 52 weeks of the year.

Nick Gibb:

The Department plans to spend around £3.5 billion on early education entitlements this year alone. Government funding is intended to deliver 570 or 1140 hours a year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year of free, high quality, flexible childcare for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds. This equates to 15 or 30 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year to mirror school terms.

All the free entitlements can be “stretched” by taking fewer hours per week over up to 52 weeks of the year to cover term-time and the school holidays and free places can also be delivered at weekends (for example, 23 hours a week for 48 weeks of the year). These entitlements will allow providers to respond flexibly to parents’ individual needs and requirements so that parents are supported to work.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Forestry

Stephen Morgan: [\[288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the effect of integrating trees into productive land management systems through agroforestry on (a) land management and (b) tackling climate change.

Zac Goldsmith:

The Department is aware of the complementary benefits of integrating trees into productive land management systems using agroforestry practices. We recognise that agroforestry can play an important role in addressing some of the key issues of land management by using land more efficiently and helping tackle climate change.

Agroforestry can provide multiple benefits for soil, farm run-off, water quality, air quality, carbon sequestration, and support and enhance biodiversity.

Stephen Morgan: [\[290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans her Department has to increase the number of trees integrated into productive land management systems through agroforestry.

Zac Goldsmith:

The Department plans to increase the number of trees in England through a range of woodland creation options including agroforestry. We know that it is important to have a wide portfolio of tree afforestation methods when planting trees in productive land management systems as every farm situation is different. This allows greater flexibility and ultimately optimal use of agricultural land in England. Furthermore, it will help us meet the shared (public/private sector) aspiration of reaching 12% woodland cover in England by 2060.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Chief Scientific Advisers

Norman Lamb: [\[85\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings she had with her Department’s Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

George Eustice:

Defra’s former Chief Scientific Adviser Ian Boyd left Defra at the end of August and on 1 October 2019 Gideon Henderson was appointed. The Secretary of State was

appointed on the 24 July 2019 and has not yet held any bilateral meetings with the Chief Scientific Adviser since this date and 31 August 2019. The Chief Scientific Adviser regularly attends other Secretary of State meetings on wider issues.

■ Farms: Tenancy Agreements

Kevin Hollinrake:

[R] [\[297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Agricultural tenancy consultation and call for evidence on mortgage restrictions and repossession protections for agricultural land in England, if the Government will widen the scope of the proposed changes to include all commercial property.

George Eustice:

The Government call for evidence regarding mortgage restrictions and repossession of agricultural land is now closed and a response will be published shortly. Before taking forward any proposals for legislative changes, Defra would discuss issues of scope with other Government departments.

■ Forests

Jane Dodds:

[\[269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to support reforestation.

Zac Goldsmith:

Domestically, the Government is on course to plant 11 million trees this Parliament (2017-2022), with at least 3.6 million trees (2,318 hectares) of woodland planted since April 2017, and over 15 million trees planted since 2010. In the Autumn Budget 2018, the Government announced an additional £60 million for tree planting initiatives, comprising £10 million to fund urban tree planting through the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, and £50 million for a Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme. This will add to other new planting in the pipeline, including the High Speed 2 Woodland Fund, the Woodland Carbon Fund, a kick start investment in the Northern Forest and support for a new Northumberland Forestry Partnership, to deliver a new forest region starting with 1 million trees planted by 2024.

The Prime Minister recently announced a doubling of UK International Climate Finance (ICF) to at least £11.6 billion over the next five years. This spend will include a focus on nature based solutions to climate change. Through ICF, the UK currently funds several programmes in developing countries that use native tree-planting as a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and generating economic benefits for rural communities. For example, Defra's investments aim to restore 550,000 hectares of forest, generating 90 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions savings. This includes a £10 million project to restore up to 20,000 hectares of mangrove forest in Madagascar and Indonesia.

■ Plastics

Dr Dan Poulter:

[190]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to reduce the availability of single use plastics; and will she make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

Published last year, the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy, sets out our plans to reduce, reuse and recycle more plastic than we do now. Our target is to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste throughout the life of the 25 Year Environment Plan, but for the most problematic plastics we are going faster - that is why we commit to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the UK market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.

We have made good progress. Our plastic bag charge has led to a 90% reduction in the use of plastic carrier bags in the main retailers, and we recently consulted on plans to extend the charge to all retailers and on increasing the minimum charge to at least 10p. We want to further incentivise people to choose sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics. We are therefore seeking a power in the Environment Bill to be able to place a charge on any single-use plastic item.

In addition, the Government will introduce a ban, with exemptions, on the supply of single use plastic drinking straws, plastic drink stirrers and plastic-stemmed cotton buds to the end user in England in April 2020. As set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy, we will take a strategic approach to the use of bans as part of a broader approach to reduce the use of single-use plastics.

■ Plastics: Packaging

Stephen Crabb:

[125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce the use of polystyrene in packaging.

Paul Farrelly:

[81]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will take steps to ban the (a) production and (b) use of polystyrene plastic packaging in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Packaging materials, including polystyrene, are already covered by the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations which place a legal obligation on businesses that make or use packaging to ensure that a proportion of the packaging they sell is recovered and recycled. This creates an incentive for companies to use less packaging and to ensure that their packaging can be recycled at end of life as it will reduce their costs in complying with the Regulations.

In general, we prefer to help people and companies make the right choice, rather than banning items outright. We have, however, recently consulted on changes to the packaging producer responsibility scheme, looking at all aspects of the regime including mechanisms to encourage increased recyclability.

■ Trees: Inner City Areas

Ian Austin: [75]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether she has plans to develop a national plan for inner city trees.

Zac Goldsmith:

In November 2018, the Secretary of State announced that we will launch a national Tree Strategy for England. The Tree Strategy will set out the Government's vision for the sector for the years to come and will aim to cover both rural and urban areas. The Strategy will set out how we intend to use a natural capital approach to forestry to maximise the benefits trees can provide such as carbon sequestration, increasing biodiversity and improving water and air quality.

We aim to publish the Tree Strategy in 2020 following a broad and open-ended consultation to maximise sectoral engagement and gauge ambition outside of Government.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit

Gloria De Piero: [246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with reference to the oral contribution of 25 September 2019 from the Prime Minister, Official Report column 791, when he plans to publish the details of the cross-party talks on the UK's exit from the EU.

James Duddridge:

The cross-party talks on the UK's exit from the EU were undertaken by the previous administration. These talks explored aspects of the Withdrawal Agreement and the Political Declaration and sought to reach a compromise, but at the time, this was unsuccessful. The then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, the Rt hon member for Aylesbury, and the hon member for Holborn and St Pancras gave evidence in July to the EU Select Committee on those talks:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/exiting-the-european-union-committee/news-parliament-2017/starmer-lidington-cross-party-evidence-17-19/>

We want to get a deal. This is why we have put forward a serious offer to the EU. It is a fair and reasonable compromise for all sides that respects the referendum. This new proposal means we will take back control of our laws and our borders, protect the Good Friday Agreement and the peace process, and ensures democratic consent for the arrangement.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to maintain sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Christopher Pincher:

The United Kingdom remains disappointed that Mauritius took its bilateral dispute with us over the sovereignty of BIOT (Chagos Archipelago) to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for an Advisory Opinion (AO). This is an inappropriate use of the ICJ Advisory Opinion mechanism and sets a dangerous precedent for other bilateral disputes. However, an AO is not a legally binding judgment, it is advice provided to the UN General Assembly at its request. And while the British Government respects the ICJ and has considered the content of the AO carefully, it does not share the Court's approach. No international tribunal has ever found UK sovereignty to be in doubt. We stand by our long-standing commitment to cede sovereignty of the territory to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes, but strongly refute Mauritius' claim that BIOT is part of Mauritius. In the UN General Assembly we have been clear that any action that potentially compromises the current or future operations of the joint defence facility on BIOT should be of real concern to all States, given the important role it plays in regional and global peace and security.

Daniel Kawczynski:[\[117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which international legally binding agreements enshrine UK sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Christopher Pincher:

We have no doubt about our sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), which has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. The 1965 United Kingdom – Mauritian Lancaster House Agreement was a freely negotiated package that expressed the consent of Mauritius to the detachment of the Chagos Archipelago in return for certain benefits, including a sum of £3 million and a United Kingdom commitment to cede the territory to Mauritius when it is no longer needed for defence purposes. Internationally, Mauritian Ministers reaffirmed the 1965 Agreement on several occasions, at the highest level. The 1965 agreement was held to be legally binding by a UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) arbitral tribunal in 2015.

■ Catalonia: Sovereignty**Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Spanish counterparts on the jailing of Catalan politicians.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been clear that the situation in Catalonia is a matter for Spain. The United Kingdom supports the rule of law. Questions related to the issue of Catalan independence should be resolved within the proper constitutional and legal channels. Political leaders, like anyone else, have a duty to abide by the law. I outlined this position to the Spanish Ambassador and in Parliament on 15 October.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:[\[111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in (a) Austria, (b) Belgium, (c) Bulgaria, (d) Croatia, (e) Cyprus, (f) the Czech Republic, (g) Denmark, (h) Estonia, (i) Finland, (j) France, (k) Germany, (l) Greece, (m) Hungary, (n) Ireland, (o) Italy, (p) Latvia, (q) Lithuania, (r) Luxembourg, (s) Malta, (t) Netherlands, (u) Poland, (v) Portugal, (w) Romania, (x) Slovakia, (y) Slovenia and (z) Sweden on the jailing of Catalan politicians.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been clear on the issue of Catalonia. This is a matter for Spain. The United Kingdom continues to support the upholding of the Spanish Constitution and the rule of law. The conviction of the separatist leaders in Catalonia is a matter for the Spanish courts. The Foreign Secretary has had no discussions on this with his counterparts in the countries cited.

Angus Brendan MacNeil:[\[112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, on the jailing of Catalan politicians.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been clear on the issue of Catalonia. The United Kingdom continues to support the upholding of the Spanish Constitution and the rule of law. The conviction of the separatist leaders in Catalonia is a matter for the Spanish courts. The Foreign Secretary has had no discussions with the President of the European Council on this matter.

■ China: Nuclear Power and Nuclear Weapons**Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[18\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what arrangements exist to monitor (a) civilian and (b) military nuclear capability in China.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

China is subject to oversight of its civil capability under the Voluntary Offer Agreement it signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency on facility safeguards. As a fellow member of the P5, we work with China on a range of issues including nuclear questions. The P5 process, an informal working group for discussing issues related to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of which China is a

signatory, provides a forum for discussions on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

■ China: Uighurs

Yasmin Qureshi:

[261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to reports that forced labour linked to mass detentions in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has been used to produce cotton for export, if his Department will take steps to help ensure that cotton products on sale in the UK did not originate in prison camps in Xinjiang.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK is taking steps to ensure products on sale in the UK do not originate from sources that use forced labour. The UK is also committed to ending modern slavery and forced labour by 2030, as unanimously adopted in the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development, and jointly launched the 'Principles to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains' with the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand at the UN General Assembly in September 2018.

Further, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires applicable commercial organisations to publish a modern slavery statement for each financial year of their organisation. It applies to all commercial organisations which carry on a business, or part of a business, in the UK, supply goods or services and have an annual turnover of £36m or more. The modern slavery statement must set out what steps they have taken during the financial year to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place in their supply chains and in their own organisation.

We continue to have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang where there are credible reports of over a million Uyghurs and other minorities being detained in so called "re-education camps", along with widespread surveillance and restrictions targeted at minorities.

■ Colombia: War Crimes

Jo Stevens:

[345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart to investigate the assertion by Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace that between 500 and 600 people could be buried in unmarked graves in the zone of the Hidroitungo construction project.

Christopher Pincher:

We are aware of the ongoing investigation by Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) into the possibility of unmarked graves in the construction zone of the Hidroitungo dam project. It would not be appropriate to comment on the detail of an

ongoing investigation by the JEP. The United Kingdom has provided financial and public support to Colombia's transitional justice system since it was set up. We continue to work closely with the Colombian government and civil society on the peace process and related matters.

■ **Diego Garcia: Military Bases**

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the contribution made by the Diego Garcia military base towards US and UK operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Christopher Pincher:

The joint United Kingdom-US defence facility on BIOT contributes significantly to global security. In a region facing growing threats from state and non-state actors, the strategic location of BIOT enables the US and the United Kingdom to better some of the most challenging threats in modern times.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will discuss the importance of the Diego Garcia military base with his US counterpart at the forthcoming NATO summit in December 2019.

Christopher Pincher:

The details of meetings for the NATO summit have yet to be finalised. The joint United Kingdom-US defence facility on BIOT is the result of a uniquely close and active defence and security partnership between two long-standing allies. In a region facing growing threats from state and non-state actors, it helps keep people in Britain and around the world safe from some of the most challenging threats to international peace and security.

■ **Kashmir: Politics and Government**

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[191\]](#)

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

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

Events in Kashmir can have regional and international implications and we continue to urge calm and caution from all. We are following the situation closely. We welcome reports that restrictions on landline and mobile phone communications have been lifted. But we remain concerned at the ongoing detentions and continued restrictions on internet use in some areas. We are in regular contact with the Governments of India and Pakistan. The Prime Minister has spoken to both Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Imran Khan about the situation in Kashmir, underlining the importance of maintaining dialogue. The Foreign Secretary has also raised his concerns about the situation with the Indian Minister for External Affairs Dr Jaishankar.

■ Mauritius: Diplomatic Relations

Daniel Kawczynski:

[116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the address to the Mauritian Prime Minister at the UN General Assembly on 22 May 2019, what steps he has taken to improve diplomatic relations with Mauritius.

Andrew Stephenson:

Mauritius is a valued friend, trading partner and member of the Commonwealth. We are fully committed to our bilateral relationship. But we have been clear that Prime Minister Jugnauth's unjustified and incendiary remarks at the United Nations General Assembly in May were unacceptable. We have no doubt about our sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), which has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius has never held sovereignty over BIOT and we do not recognise its claim. We have, however, made a long-standing commitment to cede sovereignty of BIOT to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes. We stand by that commitment.

■ Russia: Sanctions

Sir Nicholas Soames:

[13]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the sanctions regime on Russia.

Christopher Pincher:

Sanctions are having an impact on Russia, exacerbating negative trends in its economy following the oil price collapse of 2014 and rooted in deep seated structural weakness. Financial sector sanctions continue to make it expensive and hard for designated Russian entities to access western finance and have a general chilling effect on foreign investment in Russia. Sanctions were not designed to impose a particular, specific, degree of pain on Russia's economy or on the Russian people. They were designed to deliver a cost for Russia's adventurism in Ukraine. Maintaining focus on existing Russia/Ukraine sanctions is more important than ever to continue to pressure Russia to change its Ukraine policy.

Russia has also been affected by the EU Chemical Weapons sanctions regime. Although the regime does not target one country, the designation of the two GRU officials, who are responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Salisbury, as well as the Head and Deputy Head of the GRU, sends a powerful and collective message that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable.

■ Syria: Military Intervention**Catherine West:**[\[291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports that Turkish forces and their allies are engaged in ethnic cleansing in Syria.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UN have reported violations of International Humanitarian Law, including incidents of summary executions, during the Turkish military offensive in north-east Syria. We are seriously concerned by these reports which we have raised with the Government of Turkey. We have reiterated the importance of all sides abiding by their obligations under international law. We have made clear, alongside our EU partners, that any attempt at demographic change would be unacceptable.

■ USA: Open Skies Treaty**Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[14\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his US counterpart on the Open Skies Treaty.

Christopher Pincher:

Although the Foreign Secretary has not raised this with his US counterpart, senior officials from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence have raised the topic with their US counterparts, emphasising the United Kingdom's commitment to the Treaty, which forms an important part of the Rules-Based International System.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 291080, when other parts of his Department received information that RSLF troops were deployed in Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

On 18 June 2019, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office received information from the British Embassy in Riyadh that RSLF troops were deployed in Yemen. The Saudi Arabian authorities do not routinely inform us of their military deployments.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Diabetes: Mental Health Services****Jeremy Lefroy:**[\[248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to mental health support for people with type 1 diabetes.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to increasing the provision of mental health support for all patients who require it. The importance of addressing the mental health needs of people with diabetes is recognised and further work is underway to consider the most effective routes for supporting this as part of the future development of services.

On 21 March 2018, NHS England and NHS Improvement, along with the National Collaboration Institute for Mental Health, published 'The Improving Access to Psychotherapy Therapy (IAPT) Pathway for People with Long-term Physical Health Conditions and Medically Unexplained Symptoms'. The guidance outlines the IAPT pathway, and accompanying benchmarks, to support the national expansion of IAPT services for adults with long term conditions and medically unexplained symptoms.

■ Fertility: Medical Treatments**Andrew Percy:**[\[264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to assess the implications of the judgment in R (TT) v Registrar General for England and Wales & Ors ((2019) EWHC 2384 (Fam)) on members of the trans community who wish to access fertility treatment at a licensed clinic.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Court found that the scheme of birth registration for the children of transmen is lawful and proportionate. The Government welcomes the Court's decision.

The Government's view is that the judgment has no effect on the availability of regulated fertility treatment and will now consider whether there should be further guidance to clarify this position. The Government considers that regulated fertility treatment is currently, and will remain, equally available to all (trans) women and (trans) men under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Acts.

■ General Practitioners: Mental Health Services**Sir Vince Cable:**[\[23\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on implementing recommendation 36 in the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health on ensuring that all GPs receive core mental health training by 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government is working to ensure that all general practitioners are suitably trained in mental health issues. Mental health care is an essential element of general practice. Mental health care is emphasised in the Royal College of General Practitioners (GP) curriculum. All GP specialty trainees receive mental health training in their 18 months in general practice and this is regarded as a core element of their training.

Health Education England is working with NHS England and Royal College of General Practitioners to further improve mental health training of GPs as part of building training capacity in primary care for multi-professional, multi-disciplinary training, clinical placements and continuing professional development.

■ General Practitioners: Working Hours**Royston Smith:****[305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what procedures are in place to record the number of patients offered (a) evening and (b) weekend appointments at GP surgeries.

Jo Churchill:

Data on the number of patients offered evening and weekend appointments is not collected or held centrally.

Data on extended access appointments is collated by an internal monitoring survey by quarterly submissions from clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). CCGs collect data on the number of appointments available, booked and 'Did Not Attends' for each day of the reporting month and what practices offer online consultations. This does not include data on the number of patients offered evening and weekend appointments.

■ Health Services: Foreign Nationals**Vicky Foxcroft:****[309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what meetings (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have had with the (i) Royal College of Physicians, (ii) Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, (iii) Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and (iv) Faculty of Public Health to discuss their call for the NHS overseas visitors charging regime to be suspended; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

Neither my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care nor the Ministers in the Department have had meetings with the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists or the Faculty of Public Health specifically about their call for the suspension of the National Health Service overseas visitors charging regime.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Ruth George:

[324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question 284706, what advice the Government has issued to UK citizens travelling in the EU that require treatments not routinely covered by travel insurance policies after the UK leaves the EU.

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. This includes the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which can support UK residents with long term conditions travelling to the EU who may require needs arising treatment.

The Government understands the concerns of patients with long term conditions and is working to secure the continuation of reciprocal healthcare arrangements, so UK and EU nationals have access to medical treatment in the same way they do now.

Guidance for travelling to the EU after EU exit is available on gov.uk, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-residents-visiting-the-eueea-and-switzerland-healthcare>

The UK Government is advising people with pre-existing or long term medical conditions to also check the Money and Pensions Advice Service which has information on their website for people about their options for purchasing travel insurance. Further information is available at the following link:

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/travel-insurance-for-over-65s-and-medical-conditions

■ Hospital Food Review

Tom Watson:

[124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government's review of hospital food will include mental health hospitals.

Jo Churchill:

Mental health hospitals are included in the National Health Service hospital food review.

■ Mental Health Act 1983 Independent Review

Sir Vince Cable:

[21]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress the Government has made on responding to the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act; and what plans he has to ensure that people with direct experience of the Mental Health Act 1983 continue to be involved in designing future reforms.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have already accepted a number of the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983's recommendations and we will publish a White Paper by the end of this year, setting out our response in full. This will pave the way for reform to the Act and tackle issues addressed by the Review.

There will be a public consultation on the reforms. We also plan to run a number of public engagement events, in particular, with those who have had direct experience of the Act.

We have also drawn on the expertise of service users, carers and professionals as we have considered the review's recommendations.

■ Mental Health Services: Domestic Abuse**Rachael Maskell:**[\[272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Health and Social Care, what plans he has to improve cooperation between mental health services and the voluntary sector to support victims of domestic abuse with psychiatric health needs.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service Mental Health Implementation Plan highlights the essential role the voluntary sector will play in the design and delivery of services, including services which will benefit victims of domestic abuse with psychiatric health needs. It recommends commissioners and providers vary procurement routes to give more opportunity for the voluntary sector to provide services, and encourages commissioners to support and develop local voluntary sector capacity. NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned guidance and tools to support this.

The Department is overseeing £2 million of Government funding to expand a pathfinder programme developing a model health system response to domestic abuse including in mental health settings, to bridge the gap between the voluntary sector and NHS services, and to harness the strengths of each.

■ Mental Health Services: Staff**Sir Vince Cable:**[\[22\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government will publish a full workforce strategy to (a) address shortages in the mental health workforce and (b) support the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan.

Edward Argar:

The interim NHS People Plan was published on 3 June 2019 and sets out the action we will take now and over the long term to address workforce shortages, strengthen education and training, and improve culture and leadership in the National Health Service. The interim NHS People Plan recognises that urgent action must be taken to increase the numbers of mental health nurses and to strengthen the training and skill mix for those working in mental health.

Mental health matters as much as physical health and the Government is prioritising resources to deliver real improvements for those who access services and work in that sector.

The final NHS People Plan is due to be published in the next few months.

■ NHS Trusts: Managers

Vicky Foxcroft: [310]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Overseas Visitor Managers are employed by NHS Trusts in (a) England (b) Scotland and (c) Wales.

Edward Argar:

Information about the number of Overseas Visitor Managers employed by National Health Service trusts in England is not held by the Department nor by NHS England.

The number of Overseas Visitor Managers employed by NHS trusts in Scotland and Wales is a matter for the devolved administrations.

■ NHS: Drugs

Ruth George: [325]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there will be no shortage of the medicines and consumables needed for dialysis or transplantation following the UK's departure from 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 Department, as part of our EU exit preparations, continues to implement a multi-layered approach to mitigate potential disruption to supply, which includes medicines and consumables needed for dialysis or transplantation. This approach 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>

■ Nurses: Training

Jeremy Lefroy: [249]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reinstating the nursing bursary.

Edward Argar:

The education funding reforms unlocked the cap which constrained the number of pre-registration nurse training places allowing more students to gain access to nurse degree training courses. Eligible pre-registration nursing students now receive at least 25% more support than under the National Health Service bursary system through tuition fee loans and living cost support from the Student Loans Company.

Additionally, to support pre-registration nursing students whilst attending the clinical placement element of their courses, the Government introduced a Learning Support Fund. Eligible loan funded students can apply for non means tested and non-repayable annual payments of £1,000 for child dependents allowance, reimbursement of all clinical placement travel costs above their usual daily travel and exceptional hardship payments of up to £3,000. These are in addition to the allowances paid by the Student Loans Company.

On 19 September 2019 the Universities and College Admission Services (UCAS) published data on full-time undergraduate applicants to nursing and midwifery courses. The data shows that there are 21,590 placed applicants on nursing and midwifery courses at English providers. This is 4% higher than the same point in 2018 when there were 20,690 place applicants.

UCAS will publish further data in December 2019.

■ Ophthalmic Services**Peter Kyle:****[286]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has taken steps in response to the recommendations of the report entitled See the light: Improving capacity in NHS eye care in England, published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Eye Health and Visual Impairment in June 2018.

Jo Churchill:

The Department welcomed the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) report, 'See the Light: Improving capacity in NHS eye care in England'. We have taken the concerns of the profession and the wider sight loss sector about timeliness of patient access to eye care services very seriously.

In response to concerns about timely access to care, two key initiatives the Elective Care Transformation Programme led by NHS England and NHS Improvement's Getting It Right First Time programme have considered, as part of their respective programmes, how we can improve patient outcomes in secondary care eye care services and ensure that patients do not suffer unnecessary delays in follow-up care.

The Department is currently working with stakeholders to finalise the response to the report, which will be sent to the APPG at the earliest opportunity and following this, published on the gov.uk website.

■ Out of Area Treatment: Wales

Jane Dodds: [270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Welsh Assembly Government on waiting times for people living in Wales and receiving healthcare in England.

Edward Argar:

My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and Departmental Ministers meet with a variety of members from the devolved administrations on a regular basis, and discuss a range of operational issues.

Jane Dodds: [271]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients from Welsh postcode areas have been treated at (a) Countess of Chester Hospital, (b) Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and (c) Gloucestershire Royal Hospital in each of the last five years.

Jane Dodds: [282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients from Welsh postcode areas have been treated at Hereford County Hospital in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

Information is not held in the format requested.

■ Patients: Death

Sandy Martin: [365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether patient deaths reported to the National Reporting & Learning System by the Norfolk & Suffolk Foundation Trust in 2018-19 included deaths of those using addiction services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Trust reports deaths of patients who are accessing their services, or who have been discharged from these services within the last six months if there is evidence of a patient safety incident. This would include patients who are also known to partner services, such as addiction services.

The Trust adheres to the National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS) guidance as outlined within the Degree of Harm document available on the NHS Improvement website which specifically highlights "deaths from drugs and alcohol". This is available at the following link:

https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/1673/NRLS_Degree_of_harm_FAQs_-_final_v1.1.pdf

The guidance directs organisations to consider whether there is immediate evidence of a patient safety incident. If not, then no report would be made. However if further evidence comes to light, or post Coroner's inquest, the cause of death is identified as

a patient safety incident, the organisation would at this point make a report to the NRLS.

■ **Pregnancy: Alcoholic Drinks**

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[33]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the misrepresentation of evidence which encourages women to drink alcohol during pregnancy by downplaying the risk to the health of the unborn child.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is very clear about the dangers that alcohol poses to the unborn child and reflects this in the advice it gives. The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines published in 2016 provide clear advice to women not to drink alcohol if they are planning for a pregnancy or are pregnant. Information available on the NHS website also reflects this advice.

Additionally, the Government has been clear that the alcohol industry must reflect the UK Chief Medical Officers' alcohol guidelines on the labels of their products which includes a no drinking in pregnancy logo.

Public Health England, NHS England and local commissioners are already undertaking awareness and education on the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant. For example, the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership has recently launched its Drymester campaign to raise awareness of drinking alcohol when pregnant.

■ **Preventive Medicine**

Stephen Metcalfe:

[219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department will publish the Green Paper on prevention.

Jo Churchill:

We published our prevention Green Paper 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s', on 22 July. The consultation ended on 14 October and we are currently analysing the responses.

A copy of the prevention Green Paper can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s>

■ **Psychiatric Hospitals**

Dr Dan Poulter:

[192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many visits each Minister in his Department made to inpatient adult mental health facilities in each year since 2016.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Ministers have visited a wide range of health and care settings in this period, including inpatient adult mental health services. However, multi-site visits could include those with mental health settings, but they are not always recorded in Ministerial diaries as such.

■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Capital Investment**Sir Vince Cable:**[\[20\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to allocate new capital investment to modernise the mental health estate, as recommended by the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act, published 6 December 2018.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Improving mental health is at the heart of this Government's agenda and capital investment to modernise the mental health estate is a key part of the Government's ambition to achieve greater parity between physical and mental health care.

The Government has announced investments of over £400 million in improving the mental health estate since July 2017. Most recently this included £72.3 million for Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust to develop a new adult mental health inpatient unit and £33 million to Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust for a 40-bed low secure unit for people with learning disabilities, both of which were included in the £850 million capital funding for 20 hospital upgrades announced by the Prime Minister on 5 August. In addition, the Department spent almost £19 million capital last year on central programmes to support mental health services. This includes schemes to deliver Perinatal Mental Health Mother and Baby Units to deliver more personalised care to expectant and new mums with serious mental ill health.

As set out in the new Health Infrastructure Plan on 30 September, the Government is committed to making further strategic investments to modernise mental health facilities, which will be confirmed when the Department receives a multiyear capital settlement at the next capital review.

HOME OFFICE**■ Burglary: West Midlands****Emma Reynolds:**[\[254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many burglaries were recorded as having been committed in (a) Wolverhampton and (b) the area covered by West Midlands Police in each year since 2010; and how many of those burglaries involved a violent assault.

Emma Reynolds:**[255]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many assaults against disabled people were recorded in (a) Wolverhampton and (b) the area covered by West Midlands Police in each year since 2010.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects data on the number of burglaries recorded by the police in England and Wales and these data are published quarterly. It is not possible to separately identify the number of burglaries that involved a violent assault in the information that we hold centrally. However, data is available on the number of aggravated burglary offences. These includes burglaries in which an offender is in possession of any firearm or imitation firearm, other weapon or explosive at the time of committing the offence.

Data for West Midlands Police Force Area and for Wolverhampton Community Safety Partnership (CSP) area can be found in open data tables here back to the financial year 2002/03:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

Information on the number of assaults against disabled people recorded by the police is not held centrally.

■ Domestic Abuse**Paul Farrelly:****[50]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure equal protection for all domestic abuse survivors by upholding the non-discrimination principle in accordance with Article 4(3) of the Istanbul Convention.

Victoria Atkins:

In respect of migrant victims of domestic abuse we have committed to undertake a review into the Government's overall response and this work began over the summer period. The review will specifically consider the recommendations made by the Joint Committee on Domestic Abuse following their pre-legislative scrutiny of the Domestic Abuse Bill. In considering our response, we will take into account any obligations we may have under the Istanbul Convention.

■ Home Office: Chief Scientific Advisers**Norman Lamb:****[86]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings she had with her Department's Chief Scientific Adviser from 1 June to 31 August 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

Home Office Ministers have regular meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others as part of the process of policy development and delivery. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings.

■ National Policing Board

Louise Haigh: [341]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how times the National Policing Board met in the last 12 months.

Kit Malthouse:

The National Policing Board has met twice so far this year, most recently on 8 October and previously on 31 July.

■ Police

Maria Eagle: [44]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers were employed in each police force area in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Maria Eagle: [45]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers were lost from each police force area in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Maria Eagle: [46]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officer posts were lost from each police force area in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Maria Eagle: [47]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officer post vacancies there have been in each police force area in England and Wales in each year since 2010.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of police officers in each Police Force Area (PFA) in England and Wales, as well as the number of officers that leave each year, in the annual 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin.

The number of officers employed in each PFA as at 31 March of each year between 2010 and 2019 is available in open data tables here:

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

The number of officers that left in each financial year between 2009/10 and 2018/19 is available in open data tables here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817733/open-data-table-police-workforce-leavers.ods

The Home Office does not hold data on the number of police officer posts lost, or data on how many police officer post vacancies. The size and composition of the

police workforce is a local decision for Police and Crime Commissioners, working with chief officers.

Dame Louise Ellman:

[49]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by how many and what proportion police officer posts have been reduced in each police force in England and Wales in each year since 2010; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not centrally hold the information requested.

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of police officers in each Police Force Area (PFA) in England and Wales, as well as the number of officers that leave each year, in the annual 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin.

The number of officers employed in each PFA as at 31 March of each year between 2010 and 2019 is available in open data tables here:

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

The Home Office does not hold data on how many and what proportion of police officer posts have been reduced by in each police force in England and Wales in each year since 2010. The size and composition of the police workforce is a local decision for Police and Crime Commissioners, working with chief officers.

Strengthening police numbers is a priority for the government, which is providing £750 million to support forces to recruit up to 6,000 additional officers onto our streets by the end of 2020-21, the first stage in an uplift of 20,000 officers over the next three year. All officers recruited as part of the 20,000 uplift will be additional to those hired to fill existing vacancies. They are also on top of the extra officers already being recruited because of the £1 billion increase in police funding for 2019-20, which includes money from council tax and for serious violence.

■ Terrorism

Catherine West:

[292]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effect on the UK terrorist threat level of ISIS militants escaping prison in Syria following the Turkish incursion into Kurdish controlled territory in Syria.

Brandon Lewis:

We recognise the situation in North East Syria is extremely fragile and complex; and continue to work closely with international partners to secure regional stability and address humanitarian issues. Ensuring justice and minimising the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters detained in Syria is one of our top counter-terrorism priorities.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ Developing Countries: Nutrition**

Mr Laurence Robertson: [39]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that nutrition is incorporated within the UK's commitment to the Global Partnership for Education; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK Government is proud to be the largest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education, which has supported 22.2 million children's education since 2015. This can include providing nutrition to children, often in the early years of life, depending on the needs within the country. Examples of these grants can be found on the Global Partnership for Education website:

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/search/site/nutrition>. The UK Government is a global leader on nutrition; we have reached 60.3 million people with nutrition services in 25 countries since 2015.

Mr Laurence Robertson: [40]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to ensure its Water, Sanitation and Hygiene programmes integrate nutrition objectives; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a key part of tackling undernutrition. For example, the act of infant and child feeding needs good personal hygiene – hand washing with soap and water, and good food hygiene. Since 2015, DFID has helped over 51 million poor people in Africa and Asia get access to a drinking water supply or toilet for the first time.

DFID also supports programmes where water supplies are developed for multiple uses, which include nutrition objectives. For example, a DFID-supported project in Madagascar has partnered with the agricultural sector to develop water supplies for domestic use and for irrigating market gardens, to improve nutrition and build resilience to future shocks.

■ East Africa: Food Supply

Mr Laurence Robertson: [38]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the food security situation in East Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Stephenson:

DFID is concerned by the severe food insecurity in East Africa and has taken early action through its substantial portfolio of humanitarian support and longer-term responses to tackling chronic hunger. According to Save the Children nearly 13 million people across the Horn of Africa, of whom 50% are children, now face critical

levels of hunger owing to insufficient levels of rain in 2019 and earlier years. Prevailing dry conditions across the region have led to the deterioration of farmland and pastures, loss of livestock, sharply increased food prices, and reduction of the availability of water.

In Ethiopia, DFID supports the Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme that reaches 8 million chronically food insecure people in drought affected regions. The UK remains at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Somalia, delivering emergency aid to over 1 million people and supporting up to 1.5 million people through long-term resilience projects. In Kenya, DFID supports the Government of Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme, which also provides cash transfers to some of the poorest households.

Our work on humanitarian early warning systems raises awareness of crises where food security is deteriorating. We also prioritise longer-term responses to support food security, including through our agricultural programmes and the UK's global leadership on tackling climate change and its impacts.

■ Overseas Aid: Charities

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[36\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding his Department has allocated to UK based charitable organisations to implement his Department's international development programmes in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Andrew Stephenson:

A full answer to this question could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. UK based charitable organisations are critical policy and programme partners for DFID. Funding opportunities include the Small Charities Challenge Fund, UK Aid Direct and UK Aid Match.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[37\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding his Department has allocated to charitable organisations based outside the UK to implement his Department's international development programmes in each of the last five years.

Andrew Stephenson:

A full answer to this question could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. DFID is committed to working with charitable organisations based outside of the UK. Funding is available through our country offices, and both streams of the latest funding round of UK Aid Direct were open to applications from the global south.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the response of 24 May 2018 to freedom of information request number FOI2018/00517, whether the arms export licence referred to in that response remains extant; and whether her Department continues to issue arms export licences for the sale of Paveway bombs to (a) Saudi Arabia and (b) its coalition allies.

Graham Stuart:

The licences referred to in FOI2018/00517 have all expired.

Since the Court of Appeal's judgment of 20 June 2019, new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia and other coalition partners for items which might be used in the conflict in Yemen, including Paveway bombs have been halted.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many applications for licences for the export of arms to (a) Saudi Arabia and (b) its coalition partners have been received by her Department since 20 June 2019; what the dates of those licence applications were; and which type of (i) arms and (ii) export licence those applications were for.

Graham Stuart:

We have received a) 86 applications for military rated items for export to Saudi Arabia and; b) 178 applications for military rated items for export to coalition partners.

We cannot disclose any further information, as the applications are commercially sensitive.

■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

Jack Dromey: [\[250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the UK's temporary tariff schedule on (a) duties levied on automotive components and (b) levels of competition in the automotive sector.

Conor Burns:

If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, the Government will introduce the Temporary Tariff Regime (TTR) for imports into the UK that are not subject to alternative trade arrangements, applying for up to 12 months. The Government has published a Tax Information and Impact Note on the TTR, which is standard practice to support tax policy decisions.

Under the TTR, tariffs would be retained on a number of finished vehicles in order to support the automotive sector in light of broader challenging market conditions. Car makers relying on EU supply chains would not however face additional tariffs on car

parts imported from the EU to prevent disruption to supply chains. Preserving access to good value intermediate goods will support the competitiveness of the UK's own exports. The Government believes British business is in a strong position to compete in the global market once we have left the EU, selling British-made goods such as our high-quality British cars into markets across the world.

Jack Dromey: [\[251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government has conducted an impact assessment of the potential effects on the UK automotive industry of (a) the UK temporary import tariff schedule and (b) the imposition of tariffs on UK exports.

Conor Burns:

The Government policy is to leave the EU with a deal. Doing so will allow both the EU and the UK to retain the reciprocal tariff arrangements that benefit both businesses and consumers until our future relationship is agreed. If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, the Government will introduce the Temporary Tariff Regime (TTR) for imports into the UK that are not subject to alternative trade arrangements, applying for up to 12 months. The Government has published a Tax Information and Impact Note on the TTR, which is standard practice to support tax policy decisions.

■ Overseas Trade

Chuka Umunna: [\[900011\]](#)

What steps she is taking to support businesses with cross-border supply chains after the UK leaves the EU.

Conor Burns:

We are taking steps to support businesses in all scenarios and are working on securing a deal to ensure minimised disruption to supply chains. Our temporary tariff regime, in the event of no-deal, will support supply chains and sensitive sectors in the UK economy.

■ Overseas Trade: Brazil

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[29\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her Brazilian counterpart on ensuring that UK-Brazil trade does not adversely affect the preservation of the Amazon rainforest.

Conor Burns:

This Government shares concerns about deforestation in the Amazon and during my recent visit to Brazil, I raised the UK's commitment to environmental protection and offered support to Brazil in the transition to renewable energy and a lower carbon economy. We are working in partnership with Brazilian businesses, farmers and State governments to support sustainable development for the benefit of Brazilian communities and ecosystems, investing over £150million of climate finance in forest

programmes across the country. This includes the extra £10 million recently announced by the Prime Minister.

Christian Matheson: [\[900009\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with her Brazilian counterpart on ensuring that UK-Brazil trade does not adversely affect the preservation of the Amazon rainforest.

Emma Dent Coad: [\[900013\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with her Brazilian counterpart on ensuring that UK-Brazil trade does not adversely affect the preservation of the Amazon rainforest.

Conor Burns:

With your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to take question 8 and 12 together.

This Government is committed to protecting the world's rainforests. During my recent visit to Brazil, I raised the UK's commitment to environmental protection and offered support to Brazil in the transition to renewable energy and a lower carbon economy.

We are working in partnership with Brazil and through UK Government-led programmes, investing over £150 million of climate finance in forest programmes across the country.

I was delighted that on my return from Brazil in August, the PM announced an extra £10 million in the aftermath of recent fires.

■ Overseas Trade: Rural Areas

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[900012\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the extent of international trading opportunities for (a) Yorkshire and (b) other counties in rural regions.

Graham Stuart:

In 2018 the value of exports from Yorkshire & the Humber was 25% higher than 2010. Rural based companies are also exporting more than before and as we leave the EU we will strike new trade deals and open new markets for UK products and services.

■ Overseas Trade: Scotland

Stuart C. McDonald: [\[900008\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the ability of Scottish businesses to trade internationally in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Conor Burns:

- The best way to prevent any disruption for businesses, is to support the PM's deal.
- The SNP want to the leave the UK but the Scottish Government's own trade statistics show the majority of Scotland's exports go to the UK. In fact, Scottish

Government data states that 60% of all Scotland's exports go to the rest of the UK, compared with only 18% to the EU.

- The point remains – if you want a deal, vote for it. Support it on Saturday.

■ Overseas Trade: Turkey

Jack Dromey: [\[252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her Turkish counterpart to help ensure continuity of trade with Turkey in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal on 31 October 2019.

Conor Burns:

Recognising the importance of our trading relationship with Turkey, my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade spoke with her counterpart, Minister Pekcan, soon after taking up her role. They discussed the challenge of achieving continuity of trade, in a no deal scenario, given Turkey's customs union with the EU.

Nevertheless they agreed that there continued to be a shared ambition for a strong future trading relationship between Turkey and the UK.

■ Overseas Trade: USA

Harriett Baldwin: [\[900010\]](#)

What recent steps the Government has taken to increase trade with the US.

Conor Burns:

The US is our largest single trade partner, worth £199.5bn over the past 12 months. UK-US trade has grown by 33% over the last four years, compared to 22% for UK-EU trade. Last month the Trade Secretary and the Vice President discussed ways of increasing trade between our two countries even further. We are ready to secure an ambitious trade deal.

JUSTICE

■ Asylum: Appeals

Kerry McCarthy: [\[79\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of appeals against a refusal of an application for Section 4 support for refused asylum seekers were successful in the latest period for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Debt Collection: Regulation

Sandy Martin: [\[370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the regulation of the bailiff industry, following the call for evidence that the Government announced in Autumn 2018; and what options for regulatory reform the Government is considering in that sector.

Chris Philp:

In a statement on 22 July, the Government set out its initial response to the call for evidence on the enforcement agent reforms.

We intend to make body-worn cameras mandatory for private enforcement agents and the complaints system more effective. We are also considering strengthening regulation of the industry.

My officials have since met a range of interested parties. We hope to set out our proposals for further reform as soon as possible.

■ Hate Crime: Disability

Emma Reynolds: [\[258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been (a) prosecuted for and (b) convicted of offences where disability hate crime was a factor in each year since 2010.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on prosecutions and convictions by detailed offence. There is no specific offence under legislation for crimes involving disability hate crime, rather it is an aggravating factor in offences. This information may be held on court record, however, identifying these cases would require a manual search of court records, which would be of disproportionate cost.

■ Legal Aid Agency: Debts

Peter Kyle: [\[330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will reduce the rate of interest charged by the Legal Aid Agency to individuals who owe that Agency money.

Peter Kyle: [\[331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reason the rate of interest charged by the Legal Aid Agency to individuals who owe that Agency money has been set at 8 per cent.

Peter Kyle: [\[332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on individuals who owe money to the Legal Aid Agency of the interest rate on those debts being set at eight per cent.

Wendy Morton:

The rate in the statutory charge is currently set at 8%, which is the same as the Judgment Debt interest rate. The rate was reviewed in 2008/09. There are no current plans to reduce it.

Where legally aided clients successfully gain or retain an asset as a result of the publicly funded legal assistance they receive, they should repay the cost of their legal aid.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE■ **Twitter: Harassment**

Ian Austin: [\[127\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, with reference to the Answer of 8 October to Question 294685 on Social Media: Harrassment, whether he has made an assessment of the effect on political debate and discussion of anonymous abuse and threats on Twitter.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

I refer the Hon. member to my previous response to his question 294685 on a similar subject. People on all sides of the political divide must be able to debate freely without being subject to personal threats and abuse. The Government recognises that rising levels of intimidation in public life can prevent talented people, particularly women and those from minority backgrounds, from standing for public office. I would be happy to meet the Hon. member to discuss any particular concerns he would like to raise with me on this issue.

TRANSPORT■ **Aircraft: Air Conditioning**

Peter Kyle: [\[280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to prevent aircraft (a) passengers and (b) crew from the effects of fume events on aircraft.

Paul Maynard:

Maintaining the safety record of UK aviation is something we take very seriously. That is why concerns raised about cabin air have been investigated at length over a number of years. These scientific research projects have not been able to confirm a link between perceived cabin air quality and illness. The results have shown that the cabin/cockpit air quality is similar or better than what is observed in normal indoor environments (offices, schools, or dwellings). No occupational exposure limits and guidelines were exceeded.

The Government supports further research being conducted by the European Aviation Safety Agency to test the chemical composition and possible toxicity of air samples, and the guidance produced by the International Civil Aviation Organisation

to develop mitigation measures and ensure awareness and training to flight crew to enable them to prevent and respond to the presence of any fumes.

Peter Kyle: [281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that fume events on aircraft are investigated by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Paul Maynard:

Maintaining the safety record of UK aviation is something we take very seriously. That is why concerns raised about cabin air have been investigated at length over a number of years. These scientific research projects have not been able to confirm a link between perceived cabin air quality and illness. The results have shown that the cabin/cockpit air quality is similar or better than what is observed in normal indoor environments (offices, schools, or dwellings). No occupational exposure limits and guidelines were exceeded.

However, the Government supports further research being conducted by the European Aviation Safety Agency to test the chemical composition and possible toxicity of air samples to assess the potential health impact as well as mitigation measures.

At a national level, the Aviation Health Unit within the Medical Department of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) will continue to monitor issues around cabin air as part of their wider role as specialist adviser to the Government on aviation health issues.

■ Travel: Regulation

Chris Ruane: [70]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to page 22 of the Government's No-Deal Readiness report, what assessment his Department has made of the total cost to (a) travel operators and (b) consumers of increased regulatory requirements in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As legislation has been introduced that readies the UK for a no deal exit, an assessment of the impacts of each of these measures has been undertaken. This considers the impacts of the no deal legislation when compared to the status acquis of remaining in the EU.

For measures of less than £5m of cost or benefit to business in any given year, light-touch assessments are conducted. For policies above this threshold, a full impact assessment is undertaken and published. The impacts to all parties are considered in these assessments.

TREASURY■ **Breweries: Tax Allowances**

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[296\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend reforms to the small breweries' tax relief to include small vineyards.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government has no current plans to introduce a small vineyards tax relief. All taxes are kept under review and the introduction of any reliefs are considered at each fiscal event, including the effects on industry and the wider economy.

■ **Business**

Tom Brake: [\[15\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 7 October 2019 to Question 292791 and the article published in the Times on 10 August 2019 entitled Bailout fund to prop up businesses after Brexit, what assessment his Department has made of which businesses are at high risk of collapse in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal; and what funding has been allocated to supporting those businesses.

Rishi Sunak:

HM Treasury 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.

The government has already made £6.3 billion available to prepare for EU Exit. From this we have created £108m of funding for Brexit Business Preparedness – which is being allocated across government to ensure businesses are suitably prepared for EU exit.

In the event of no deal, the government would act quickly to outline our approach and take early action to support the economy, businesses and households. This would be followed by a Budget in the weeks thereafter.

■ **Cash Dispensing: Fees and Charges**

Chi Onwurah: [\[257\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Joint Accountability Cash Strategy Group are planning to take on the effect of the reduction in the interchange fee on free access to cash.

John Glen:

Following a Call for Evidence on Cash & Digital Payments, and in recognition of changing payment trends, the Government has set up the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy (JACS) Group.

Chaired by the Treasury, this group brings together the key regulators to co-ordinate regulatory work to support nationwide cash access. The JACS Group is considering

the whole end-to-end cash infrastructure, of which ATMs are a subset, and will publicly update on industry and regulatory activity in the Autumn.

Regarding ATMs specifically, as you know, the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) is closely monitoring developments in ATM provision and holding LINK to account over LINK's commitments to preserve the broad geographic spread of the UK's ATM network. LINK cancelled its third interchange fee reduction (the fee which funds free-to-use ATMs), due in January 2020, and put on hold its fourth reduction, due in January 2021, pending further review.

The PSR welcomed these adjustments, having stated that LINK must carefully review its decisions on interchange fees to reflect changing market conditions.

■ **Ceramics: Staffordshire**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[52\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that ceramics companies in North Staffordshire are able to avoid (a) delays in transferring raw materials to factories and (b) incurring additional costs when exporting goods in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's priority is to keep goods moving and avoid delays at the border. As the UK's customs authority, HMRC will act to ensure that border processes are as smooth as possible, without compromising security.

In the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal, businesses which trade with the EU will broadly be subject to customs controls in the same way as businesses who are presently trading with the rest of the world, although there are a number of temporary easements in place to help businesses make this transition.

To support traders with customs declarations, where the majority of UK businesses that currently export outside of the EU use an intermediary, the Government has made available £24m in grants to support training and IT costs for intermediaries and an additional £10m to support intermediaries with the costs of hiring new staff.

■ **Customs**

Chris Ruane:

[\[67\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 15 of the Government's No-Deal Readiness Report, published on 8 October 2019, what the timeframe is for routine checks at borders to recommence in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC's Day 1 model prioritises flow at the border, without compromising security. HMRC will move to a longer term model which minimises administrative burdens while improving compliance and control over time. This will be done in consultation with stakeholders.

The easements for customs that were in place for 12 April will continue to be available to traders, should the UK leave the EU without a deal in October, for at least as long as previously announced.

■ Customs Officers: Training

Chris Ruane: [68]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to page 15 of the Government's No-Deal Readiness Report, how many new customs agents have been trained as a result of the £8 million made available for that purpose.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC made £8million available from December 2018 to support customs intermediaries; £3million to increase the number of training courses available and £5million for a grant scheme to increase IT automation and fund places on training courses. A second wave of grants was made available in September 2019, with a £16m investment. Training courses can be for both new employees or to improve the skills of existing ones.

From the first wave of investment: over 3600 training courses were funded as a result of the £3m investment, and 2200 training courses were attended by businesses as a result of the £5m grant scheme, of which 1207 were undertaken by existing customs intermediaries. Employees were able to attend multiple courses so the number of individuals trained in customs procedures may be lower than the overall number of training places funded.

Grants are still being applied for and issued for the second wave of grants so figures for the number of training courses funded are not yet available.

■ Customs: Equipment

Tom Brake: [17]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) quantity and (b) value of business equipment will require an ATA Carnet for the (i) financial, (ii) musical, (iii) entertainment, (iv) professional services, (v) manufacturing and (vi) sporting sectors after the UK leaves the EU.

Jesse Norman:

In the event of the UK exiting the EU without a deal, the UK will become a single customs territory and use of an ATA Carnet will be an option for moving goods, such as exhibition stands and musical instruments, temporarily between the UK-EU.

However, ATA Carnets are just one option when moving goods temporarily between customs territories. Their use is a commercial decision and should be considered alongside temporary admission / Returned Goods Relief procedures.

For this reason it is not possible to give an accurate answer to this question.

■ Electric Vehicles: VAT

Stephen McPartland: [\[171\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to stimulate demand for commercial electric vehicles by reducing VAT for those vehicles.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has set an ambitious, legally binding target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from the UK by 2050.

Although there are no plans at present to reduce the VAT charge on electric vehicles, the Government keeps all taxes under review and assesses them against a range of fiscal and environmental considerations. The Government already makes available an incentive for the public to purchase electric vehicles over conventional vehicles: the Plug-in Car Grant (PiCG) provides grants of up to £3,500 for the purchase of a new battery electric vehicle. PiCG was launched in 2011 and has supported the purchase of around 170,000 Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

■ Food: Prices

Stephen Timms: [\[26\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has for a hardship fund to assist people in greatest difficulty in the event that food prices rise following the UK exiting the EU without a deal.

Rishi Sunak:

HM Treasury routinely monitors economic conditions and risks, and the Government has a range of mechanisms available to support vulnerable people from price rises in food. We stand ready to take appropriate action in the event the UK exits the EU without a deal.

Furthermore, officials estimate the direct impact of spending decisions on household living standards, and would continue to do so in any no deal response. This is a central consideration when allocating public funds.

The temporary tariff regime, as confirmed on 8 October, took into account, amongst other things, the need to help mitigate any price rises that could affect UK consumers and supply chains. This was a key consideration when setting tariffs on all goods, including food.

■ Housing: Capital Gains Tax

John Healey: [\[34\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the revenue from capital gains tax on residential property gains in each year from 2016-17.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC collect information on Capital Gains Tax liabilities accrued from disposals of residential property. This is summarised in the table below for the tax years 2016-17

and 2017-18. These liabilities will broadly translate into receipts for the tax years 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively. Figures for 2019-20 will not be available until next year, after the Self-Assessment deadline.

TAX YEAR	TAX LIABILITY ACCRUED
2016-17	£1,029m
2017-18	£1,128m

John Healey: [35]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the extent to which gains made on residential property that would otherwise be subject to capital gains tax are currently subject to (a) final period exemption and (b) lettings relief.

Jesse Norman:

For individuals who claim final period exemption or letting relief, there is no requirement to file a Capital Gains Tax return to HMRC if the amount payable results in no liability being incurred.

Individuals who incur a Capital Gains Tax liability must provide information on the reliefs they are claiming separately in the unstructured additional information section of the Self Assessment return. Utilising this data to provide an assessment as requested can only be done at disproportionate cost.

■ **Public Works Loan Board**

Andrew Gwynne: [76]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he had with representatives of the Local Government Association before the announcement of 9 October 2019 of a 1 per cent increase in the interest rate on new loans from the Public Works Loan Board.

Andrew Gwynne: [77]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he had with representatives of local government before the announcement of 9 October 2019 of a 1 per cent increase in the interest rate on new loans from the Public Works Loan Board.

John Glen:

The Government engages sector representatives in policy development where possible. It was not possible to do that in this case because the change was market sensitive. The Local Government Association was notified of the decision after markets closed on 8 October 2019.

Andrew Gwynne: [78]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect the one per cent increase in the interest rate on new loans from the Public Works Loan Board will have on local authorities' capital investment plans.

John Glen:

In raising interest rates for new loans from the Public Works Loan Board, the Treasury assessed the potential impact on local government capital plans. This increase returned Public Works Loan Board rates to levels that were available in 2018.

The Government will continue to work with individual authorities on a case-by-case basis if they raise concerns over their finance position.

Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services**Chris Ruane:**[\[69\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many calls have been received by the imports and exports helpline since that helpline has been operational.

Jesse Norman:

The Brexit Imports and Exports Helpline has been available since 18 September 2019. To date, the helpline has received 3271 inbound calls. The helpline has also made 28,800 outbound calls to Traders providing support, advice and signposting to GOV.UK to increase readiness for when the UK exits the EU.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**Housing: Standards****Mary Glendon:**[\[900036\]](#)

When the Government plans to consult on the introduction of mandatory accessible housing standards in building regulations.

Jake Berry:

The former Prime Minister announced that Government will consult on mandating higher accessibility standards for new housing. We will bring forward the consultation on improving accessibility standards at the earliest opportunity, ensuring it happens as part of our full review of Part M of the Building Regulations.

Mental Illness: Discrimination**Sir Vince Cable:**[\[24\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans the Government has to strengthen protections in the Equality Act 2010 for people with mental health problems who experience discrimination.

Victoria Atkins:

Tackling mental health discrimination in the workplace is a priority for the Government. We are considering the scope for further support and protection for people with mental health conditions.

The Equality Act 2010 already protects people whose mental health conditions meet the definition of disability in the Act, specifically a physical or mental impairment that

has a 'substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

Ruth George:

[\[900033\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on rail stations that are inaccessible to people with disabilities; and if she will make a statement.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We are committed to improving accessibility at rail stations, and have recently extended the Access for All programme with £300m to provide accessibility improvements at even more stations. This is in addition to improvements required whenever infrastructure work is carried out at a station by the industry.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Bereavement Support Payment**

Frank Field:

[\[55\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims for bereavement support payment, in the most recent period for which figures are available, were refused because the claimant did not apply within 21 months of the death.

Will Quince:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Frank Field:

[\[56\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to evaluate the adequacy of the bereavement support payment.

Will Quince:

Bereavement Support Payment is still a comparatively new benefit and it is key to ensure enough time has elapsed to ensure an evaluation is meaningful. We will set a date for publication once sufficient data is available.

■ **Children: Maintenance**

Martyn Day:

[\[273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291411 on Children: Maintenance, for what reasons her Department did not make an assessment of the effect of the introduction of the Scottish Rate of Income Tax in 2016 on equality of calculating child maintenance liabilities using gross income due to different tax liabilities in the constituent parts of the UK.

Martyn Day: [\[274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 3 October 2019 to Question 292298 on Children: Maintenance, if he will make a formal assessment of the potential merits of devolving child maintenance liabilities to Scotland to take account of the introduction of the Scottish Rate of Income Tax in 2016.

Mims Davies:

The Department considered the impact of the introduction of the Scottish Rate of Income Tax and how it would interact with Child Maintenance in Great Britain. Child maintenance liabilities are calculated as a percentage of a paying parent's gross annual income. Given the rate of income tax in Scotland and the level of the liability we have determined that paying parents are not disproportionately impacted.

Therefore, we have no plans to conduct an assessment of the potential merits in devolving child maintenance liabilities to Scotland.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Daily Mail and Metro Newspaper**

Ruth George: [\[316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the letter of 31 July 2019 from the Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance placed in the Library disclosing the cost of the Department's partnership with Associated Newspapers, if she will provide (a) costs of the advertising consultancy and (b) all other costs incurred in the Universal Credit Uncovered advertising campaign which ran in May and June 2019 in The Metro and online.

Ruth George: [\[322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government Legal Service approved the Universal Credit Uncovered advertising campaign in the Metro and the Mail Online in May and June 2019.

Ruth George: [\[323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will place in the Library a copy of the memo of 2 May 2019 sent by her Department's Director General of Universal Credit and Director of Communications to DWP staff setting out the purpose of the Universal Credit Uncovered advertising campaign in the Metro and Mail Online.

Will Quince:

We are the biggest Government Department with a day to day operation on which around 22 million citizens depend. The Department has a responsibility to communicate policy and essential information to claimants and other key audiences.

The Metro partnership was designed to increase understanding of Universal Credit and ensure people have the right factual information they need to make a claim and understand their potential entitlement.

We went to great lengths to ensure the factual accuracy of the campaign through extensive consultation within the Department, including the Government Legal

Department. We also consulted with the Advertising Standards Authority Copy Advice Team prior to the launch and continued to do so throughout the campaign lifetime.

The letter of 31 July 2019 placed in the House of Commons Library disclosed the full cost of the Department's partnership with Associated Newspapers. There were no advertising agencies, consultancy or additional costs associated with the campaign and detailed planning was taken forward by Departmental officials.

We have already shared a copy of the memo of 2 May 2019 from the Director General of Universal Credit and Director of Communications to DWP staff with the Work and Pensions Select Committee but can also commit to placing a copy in the House of Commons Library.

■ **Disability: Older People**

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to integrate a life cycle approach that reaches older women and men into its work to help disabled people.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government recognises how important it is to take account of individual circumstances, and this is built into our approach to both disabled people and older workers. Work coaches provide an individual and personalised service, supported by specialist roles like our Disability Employment Advisers and Older Claimants Champions.

Employers have an important role to play, and to enable them to provide the right conditions for people to thrive in the workplace, we have extended the right to request flexible working, promoted core standards for supporting employees with mental health issues, and consulted on a package of measures aiming to reduce ill-health related job loss. In February 2019, we launched an online offer of the mid-life MOT intended to act as a vital prompt to engage more people at work in planning more actively for later life.

■ **Judicial Review**

Frank Field:

[54]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases of judicial review are active in UK courts to which her Department is a party.

Mims Davies:

As at 16 October 2019, there are 29 judicial reviews active in the UK courts to which the Department is a party.

■ Social Security Benefits: Birkenhead

Frank Field:

[59]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent (a) assessment she has made of the adequacy of and (b) estimate of the staffing levels for each of the benefits administered at Hordan House in Birkenhead.

Mims Davies:

There is a team of staff within Hordan House who are currently deployed on Work and Health Decision Making. This work is managed nationally and outstanding decisions can be moved around virtually to different locations if necessary. Currently in Hordan House, there is capacity to clear the allocated Work Capability Assessment decisions each week and also import decision work from the network on a regular basis. If support is needed work can be moved out, across the network, but this is not usually necessary in Birkenhead.

Other staff within Hordan House are currently deployed on Maternity Allowance (MA). Staffing levels are reviewed regularly to meet the demand of our customers and, following a recent review, a decision was made to increase the staffing deployed to MA, supporting Birkenhead with the clearance of MA applications.

■ State Retirement Pensions

Jo Platt:

[362]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people access their state pension online.

Guy Opperman:

On-line take up figures are published on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) internet site.

- Pre-Retirement (Check your State Pension) on-line take up is 95.1% (September 2019)
- The Get your State Pension on-line take up is 57.6% (August 2019)

The links to the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) pages are updated regularly:

Check your State Pension

<https://www.gov.uk/performance/state-pension-statement>

Get your State Pension

<https://www.gov.uk/performance/state-pension-new-claims>

■ Thomas Cook: Insolvency

Ms Lisa Forbes:

[375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employees of Thomas Cook have received assistance from JobCentre Plus in Peterborough following the collapse of that company; and what support her Department is providing for that JobCentre to deal with additional workload following the collapse of that company.

Ms Lisa Forbes:[\[376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 1 October to Question 290912, which of the 100 employers her Department is working with to find jobs for former Thomas Cook employees are operating in (a) Peterborough and (b) Cambridgeshire; what specific support the rapid response service is providing in Peterborough following the collapse of Thomas Cook; and what financial support her Department has provided for jobs fairs in Peterborough.

Mims Davies:

Our local team in Peterborough are monitoring all new claims to benefits to identify where the claimant is a former employee of Thomas Cook so that they quickly receive the right level of support. We estimate that as of 15th October, 159 former Thomas Cook employees have visited Peterborough Jobcentre, of which 120 have made a claim to benefits and 39 have made a general enquiry about the support available. Additional staff from neighbouring offices are working from Peterborough Jobcentre on a temporary basis to meet any increased demand on our services.

We are working with a wide range of employers to provide support to former employees of Thomas Cook. As they are part of our national portfolio we do not readily hold details on those that are operating in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and to provide this information would incur disproportionate cost. The Department is offering a range of support to anyone affected by the closure of Thomas Cook, through our Rapid Response Service and wider DWP services. For example, a local provider is offering a series of workshops for former Thomas Cook employees to explain the range of support available to help them find a job.

Rather than providing direct financial support, our team in Peterborough have provided staff to support with the organisation and delivery of two local jobs fairs, arranged by Thomas Cook and Opportunity Peterborough. The Thomas Cook event was attended by around 850 former employees and over 100 former employees visited the DWP stand at the Opportunity Peterborough event.

Please note that the data supplied are derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only, and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

■ Universal Credit**Mr Chris Leslie:**[\[27\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to fund the Citizens Advice help to claim scheme beyond April 2020; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The Department takes seriously the need to support vulnerable claimants, and wants the application process for Universal Credit to be as quick and easy as possible, ensuring that claimants receive money at the earliest opportunity.

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland have been delivering the 'Help to Claim' service on a pilot basis since April 2019, 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.

We are committed to ensuring that delivery of services, such as Help to Claim, are carefully monitored and evaluated to provide effective support to our most vulnerable claimants, whilst ensuring value to taxpayers. We have begun evaluation of the service and will use this to inform decisions about the future of the service beyond March 2020.

Jo Platt:

[353]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number and proportion of universal credit applicants who struggle to regularly access the internet.

Will Quince:

Our Universal Credit Claimant Survey, found that 98 per cent of claimants have internet access and did claim online, and the majority of those said they found the claim process overall to be straightforward. This can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-full-service-claimant-survey>

The Department is committed to making the application process for Universal Credit as quick and easy as possible to ensure that claimants receive their award at the earliest opportunity.

Citizen's Advice and Citizen's Advice Scotland have been delivering the 'Help to Claim' service since April 2019, 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.

All Jobcentre Plus offices across the country have Wi-Fi and computers available for claimants to access the internet. For those that are still unable to access or use digital services, or are not able to travel, assistance to make and maintain their claim is available via the Freephone Universal Credit helpline. In certain circumstances, a home visit can be arranged to support a claimant in making and maintaining their claim

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Infrastructure Update

Minister for Business and Industry (Nadhim Zahawi):

[\[HCWS18\]](#)

Today I am pleased to designate the National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure, which was laid in parliament on 4 July.

This is an important milestone in finding a solution to manage the UK's higher activity radioactive waste and this marks the final step in the parliamentary process for the National Policy Statement.

It is important that we who have benefitted from nuclear technology take appropriate steps now to manage the waste created from using that technology. Nuclear technology has provided clean energy to our homes and businesses and will continue to play an important role as we transition to a carbon neutral economy. For a long time, we have also used radioactive materials to treat and diagnose serious illnesses, to deliver research and development and to help deliver industrial processes. Radioactive waste is created from a variety of sources including electricity generation, defence and healthcare, and geological disposal is internationally recognised as the safest and most secure means of permanently managing a proportion of this waste not suitable for other management regimes.

The National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure sets out the need for such disposal infrastructure to safely and securely manage the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes. The National Policy Statement provides an appropriate and effective framework for the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to examine and make decisions on development consent applications for geological disposal infrastructure in England

In order to support the requirements for the designation of the National Policy Statement for Geological Disposal Infrastructure, I am also publishing the Final Habitats Regulations Assessment Report and the Post Adoption Statement for the Appraisal of Sustainability on the department's website.

HOME OFFICE

■ Modern Slavery: 2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):

[\[HCWS20\]](#)

Today, I am publishing the 2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery. The Report covers the whole of the UK and has been drafted in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. This report sets out an assessment of the scale of modern slavery in the UK and outlines the actions that have been taken to combat it over the last year.

A copy of the report will be available on Gov.uk and placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Housing Update

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): [\[HCWS21\]](#)

Two-thirds of social housing tenants would like to buy a home, yet only a quarter believe they will ever be able to do so. That is why I have announced today the government's intention to reinvigorate the home ownership offer for social housing tenants, by introducing a new Right to Shared Ownership.

This will help reduce the gap between ambition and expectation, and make home ownership attainable and affordable for many more social housing tenants. It is part of the government's wider commitment to support people and families from all backgrounds to realise their ambition to own their own home.

The Right to Shared Ownership will give housing association tenants the right to purchase a share of the home they rent and to purchase further shares in future when they can afford to do so. Alongside this, the government will also cut the minimum initial ownership stake from 25% to 10% for all shared ownership homes, making the tenure even more accessible for aspiring homeowners who are struggling to raise a deposit.

This will build on the government's existing proposals to introduce a new national model for shared ownership. This new model will be redesigned to work effectively for aspiring home owners in today's housing market, for example, by allowing shared owners to buy further shares in smaller increments, cutting the costly fees charged for additional shares and introducing a standardised preferred model to improve mortgage availability. The combined package will make it much easier to buy an initial share and to purchase additional shares in order to build up to full ownership.

The government intends to make the Right to Shared Ownership available to tenants in all new social homes delivered with grant in the future. Future investment will be considered at a future fiscal event.

We will also work with the housing association sector on a voluntary basis to determine what offer can be made to tenants in existing homes, so that the new Right to Shared Ownership is extended as widely as possible. The Right to Shared Ownership will not apply to tenants living in existing local authority homes, who already have the statutory Right to Buy.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Aid Update

Secretary of State for International Development (Alok Sharma): [\[HCWS17\]](#)

This week marks one year on since the UK Department for International Development hosted the 2018 Safeguarding Summit, *Putting People First: tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector*.

In early 2018 the aid sector's failure over many years to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) came into sharp relief.

The shocking stories that emerged exposed how aid workers had been allowed to get away with sexual misconduct. Their actions undermined trust in the whole sector and all the positive work that it does.

So from February 2018 DFID set out to work with others to change the way the aid sector tackles SEAH, from root to branch.

The October 2018 summit in London was an important milestone. More than 500 organisations came together to make commitments for change. This included 22 donors - who provide 90% of global ODA. We committed to global standards on prevention and improved processes covering ethical behaviour, robust recruitment and complaints processes.

These were not empty promises. Work is ongoing to put victims and survivors first and drive real culture change across the aid sector. This includes:

- DFID's £10 million project with INTERPOL to help stop perpetrators of SEAH moving around the aid sector by strengthening criminal record checks and information sharing between countries. Regional hubs are being set up and priority countries have been identified.
- The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, which means employers can share data on conduct and disciplinary records related to sexual misconduct with greater confidence. It is still early days, but the over 1,500 requests for information since January have prevented the hiring of at least 10 individuals.
- Awarding the contract this month for DFID's £10 million Resource and Support Hub to provide guidance, support and training to NGOs and others and access to independent investigators for smaller charities.

Today, DFID is publishing three reports showing some of the progress made and the challenges remaining.

The first has updates from each of the eight groups which made commitments at the summit: donors, UK NGOs, private sector suppliers, the United Nations, International Financial Institutions, CDC, research funders, and Gavi and the Global Fund. Initiatives include new tools and guidance for NGOs; mechanisms to collaborate and learn lessons among private sector suppliers; a new reporting tool for United Nations staff; the development of a Good Guidance Note by International Financial Institutions and CDC;

an evidence review of safeguarding challenges by research funders; and the rollout of new training by Gavi and the Global Fund.

The second covers how donors are meeting their commitments. This includes the adoption of a new OECD Development Assistance Committee recommendation on ending SEAH in the aid sector; work to align donor SEAH clauses in funding agreements with multilateral agencies; and collective leverage to drive change across the UN. Donors are continuing to strengthen accountability, build more robust systems and drive culture change across the whole international system. The third gives more details about what DFID has done.

We have been clear that any sexual misconduct is totally unacceptable. But we know that sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector still happens far too often.

The international work led by DFID over the last year has generated good momentum and is starting to deliver results. But we must collectively keep working until every individual feels able to speak up and challenge abuses of power wherever they occur.

We must continue to do all we reasonably can to make zero tolerance a reality, by which we mean responding appropriately to every single report or case.

We must prevent SEAH from happening, listen to those affected, respond appropriately when allegations are made, and learn from every single case.

This is just the beginning of a long-term process.

I will build on the work of my predecessors to maintain momentum, to ensure the failings of the past do not happen again and to deliver better results for the people we serve.

If we do not get things right on safeguarding, and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, then we fail in our ultimate goal to support the world's poorest and jeopardise all the positive work aid does.

The commitments made at the London summit are having a positive impact. But more is required by every organisation and every programme if we are going to stop sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector. Something which we must achieve.

JUSTICE

■ The Deputy Chair of the Boundary Commission for Wales

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):

[\[HCWS22\]](#)

I should like to inform the House that I have made the following reappointment under Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986:

- The Honourable Mr Justice Lewis has been re-appointed as Deputy Chair of the Boundary Commission for Wales, effective until 31 December 2019.

TREASURY**■ Signature of the Double Taxation Agreement between the United Kingdom and Gibraltar**

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Mr Simon Clarke): [\[HCWS19\]](#)

A new Double Taxation Agreement with Gibraltar was mutually accepted in an exchange of letters signed in London on 1 October 2019 and in Gibraltar on 15 October 2019. The texts of the letters will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and made available on the GOV.UK website. The texts will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course.