



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 October 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 22 October 2019). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.

Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Fraud: Prosecutions

Sandy Martin:

[379]

To ask the Attorney General what steps his Office is taking to prosecute alleged frauds involving multiple persons who cannot afford to bring civil cases against the alleged perpetrators.

Michael Ellis:

Both the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Serious Fraud Office (SFO) are responsible for prosecuting cases of fraud.

They act in the public interest and can prosecute whether or not civil proceedings are in progress.

The government has taken concerted action over recent years to reduce the costs of civil litigation, and that work continues.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business

Sir David Lidington:

[817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when she plans to publish the eligibility criteria for companies seeking financial support as part of Operation Kingfisher; and if she will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: We continue to monitor and work closely with businesses across the country to help ensure they are fully prepared for when the UK leaves the EU and are actively considering how best to support them in the run up to and immediately after Brexit.

The Government has been clear that should there be no deal, we would support the economy through whatever appropriate action is necessary.

■ Business: South Basildon and East Thurrock

Stephen Metcalfe:

[90057]

What recent steps she has taken to support businesses in South Basildon and East Thurrock constituency.

Chris Skidmore:

We are committed to making the UK the best place to start and grow a business.

BEIS has unveiled several new measures to support business across the UK, including an £88 million boost for productivity and the publication of the SME Finance Charter.

We have also invested £591 million to South East Local Enterprise Partnership, which covers South Basildon and East Thurrock, to empower local areas to reach their potential, boosting national productivity and growth.

■ Climate Change

Caroline Lucas:

[\[900052\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to help tackle the climate emergency.

Andrea Leadsom:

Tackling climate change and delivering net zero is a top priority for me and this whole Government, which is why we will be hosting COP26 next year and the Prime Minister announced he will chair a new Cabinet Committee on Climate Change.

As the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding net zero target, we are backing words with action – from record levels of renewable power, to £2 billion of investment into clean technologies, to doubling of our International Climate Finance contribution to £11.6 billion.

■ Climate Change Convention

Barry Gardiner:

[\[830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many staff her Department have recruited to prepare for the UK hosting of the 26th Conference of the Parties.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: To date, the Department has largely resourced its preparations for COP26 through the reprioritisation of existing staff. In addition it has recruited seven new staff to work on COP26.

BEIS staff will support a whole of government effort to deliver COP26, led by a new unit in Cabinet Office, where the majority of staff will be located.

■ Environment Protection

Michael Tomlinson:

[\[900051\]](#)

What steps she is taking to support the development of new clean-energy technologies.

Chris Skidmore:

The move to cleaner economic growth is one of the greatest industrial opportunities of our time, and our Clean Growth Grand Challenge sets out how we will maximise advantages for UK industry.

We have allocated £102.5 million to the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's 'Prospering from the Energy Revolution' challenge and invested in the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.

■ Fireworks

Grahame Morris: [\[1658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will undertake to (a) review fireworks regulations and (b) reduce the maximum permitted noise level of fireworks.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is aware of concern over the impact of fireworks noise on people and animals. This is why there is already a maximum legal noise level set for fireworks.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has been working to develop a fact-based evidence base on the key issues that have been raised around fireworks which includes noise levels.

We are receiving representations from a range of stakeholders including members of the public, organisations and charities, representing a range of views. This work will inform current and future policy in this area.

■ Fracking: Earthquakes

Rosie Cooper: [\[1633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government remains committed to the traffic light system to regulate fracking following seismic activity.

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.

■ Health: Age

Stephen Metcalfe: [\[222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of time it will take to meet the Government's ageing society target of five healthier, more independent years of life.

Chris Skidmore:

Through the Ageing Society Grand Challenge (ASGC), led by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Government has set an ambitious mission to

“ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035”.

■ Manufacturing Industries

Phil Wilson: [\[900050\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the effect on manufacturing industry of the UK leaving the EU.

Andrea Leadsom:

I have met with manufacturing businesses at roundtables across the country to encourage them to get ready for Brexit and the opportunities beyond.

The recent opening of Jaguar Land Rover’s £500 million Advanced Product Creation Centre is a real vote of confidence in the UK’s future as a stronger, greener economy after we have left the European Union.

■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

Mary Creagh: [\[956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the proposals of the trustees of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme to guarantee beneficiaries bonuses.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: We are considering the proposals from the Trustees of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme regarding protection for bonuses that have already accrued, and we will report back to the House in due course.

■ Post Offices: Cash Dispensing

Frank Field: [\[900054\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to maintain universal access to cash throughout the post office network.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We are pleased to see 27 banks have made the decision to sign up to the renegotiated Banking Framework agreement in full.

There is ongoing work across government to safeguard access to cash. The government will ensure communities, particularly the most vulnerable residents and those living in rural areas, will be supported and continue to have the choice over how they manage their finances.

■ Post Offices: East Renfrewshire

Paul Masterton: [\[900053\]](#)

What steps she is taking to help ensure the viability of the post office branch network in East Renfrewshire.

Liz Twist: [\[900058\]](#)

What steps she is taking to help ensure the sustainability of the post office network.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government absolutely recognises the importance of post offices in East Renfrewshire, Blaydon and other communities across the UK and is committed to the Post Office network's future.

Government has provided a further £370 million from 2018 to 2021 to safeguard the network and invest in its future. Following this, and the new Banking Framework, postmaster pay is increasing. This has led to the most stable network in generations, with over 11,600 branches across the UK, the largest retail network in the country.

■ Renewable Energy

Tim Loughton: [\[900049\]](#)

What steps she plans to take to ensure that the majority of energy generated in the UK is from renewable sources.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Over half of the UK's electricity comes from low-carbon sources. The Carbon Brief found that from July to September 2019, renewables accounted for 40% of overall generation, compared to 33% last year.

The Government is investing £557 million in further Contracts for Difference auctions and over £3 billion for renewable technology innovation.

Additionally, we're phasing out coal by 2025 and over 50% of electricity generation will be from renewable sources by 2030.

■ UK Trade with EU

Chris Ruane: [\[446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the Government has made on establishing a public database of conformity assessment bodies that will be able to assess products against UK rules before they are UK Conformity Assessed after the UK leaves the EU.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In the event of the UK leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement, the Government will introduce a new public database of conformity assessment bodies that are able to assess products against UK regulations, called UKMCAB. UKMCAB will be publicly available on exit day. UK Notified Bodies form an important part of our economy and as such under the new regulatory regime they will automatically become UK approved bodies and be uploaded to UKMCAB after exit day.

■ Wind Power: Scotland**Carol Monaghan:**[\[900055\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Scotland on support for onshore wind.

Andrea Leadsom:

I regularly discuss a range of issues with my Right Honourable Friend the Member for Dumfries and Galloway – including our shared delight that through the recent Contracts for Difference round, Scotland will benefit from six new projects, providing 740MWs of renewable electricity capacity, paid for by consumers across the whole of Great Britain.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Business: Costs****Rebecca Long Bailey:**[\[1704\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many businesses have annual employment costs of (a) £3 million to £20 million, (b) £20 million to £40 million and (c) more than £40 million; and what the total employment costs are for businesses in each of those categories.

Kevin Foster:

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

Attachments:

1. PQ 1704 [PQ 1704.pdf]

■ Elections**Mr Jim Cunningham:**[\[1540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to encourage more people to vote in elections.

Kevin Foster:

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) and online registration have transformed electoral registration, making it easier than ever before to register to vote. The register for the 2017 General Election was, at 46.8 million, the largest ever.

The Government is working hard to ensure that Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) have the tools to ensure that electoral registers are complete and accurate. We have developed a range of resources which we have made available to the electoral community and we are convening partners to transfer our knowledge, evidence and resources so they are equipped to tackle barriers to registration for under-registered groups and deliver democratic engagement activities.

The Government also continues to work with the Cabinet Office-chaired Accessibility of Elections Working Group to make elections more accessible to disabled people. We are also starting to bring forward measures that respond to issues raised in the Government's response to the 2018 Call for Evidence on Access to Elections, with the proposals announced as part of the package around the Queen's Speech.

It is for candidates and political parties to encourage people to vote in elections.

■ Elections: Disability

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[1541\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled people are able to vote in elections (a) confidentially and (b) easily.

Kevin Foster:

The Government continues to work with the Cabinet Office chaired Accessibility of Elections Working Group to make elections more accessible to disabled people. Work has already been undertaken with Mencap and the Electoral Commission to produce Easy Read guides for registration and voting at recent polls, and we have worked with the Electoral Commission to update its guidance for Returning Officers and polling station staff.

We are also starting to bring forward measures which respond to issues raised in the Government's response to the 2018 Call for Evidence on Access to Elections, with the proposals announced as part of the package around the Queen's Speech. These will include increasing the range of support available to voters with disabilities in polling stations and allowing a wider range of people (such as carers) to assist disabled voters in polling stations if needed.

■ Electronic Government: Proof of Identity

Jon Trickett:

[\[1566\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made on transferring Verify to the private sector.

Simon Hart:

The Cabinet Office and DCMS announced a call for evidence on 19 July 2019, to seek views on how government can support the development and secure use of digital identities fit for the UK's growing digital economy.

The Cabinet Office and DCMS also announced the creation of a new Digital Identity Unit, which will help bring the public and private sector together, ensure the adoption of interoperable standards, specification and schemes, and deliver on the outcome of the call for evidence.

■ Government Departments: Digital Technology

Jon Trickett:

[\[1564\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's press release, Government's streamlined messaging service to save taxpayer £175m, published on 26 September 2019, what the sources are of the savings that the GOV.UK Notify system will deliver in each of the next five years.

Simon Hart:

[GOV.UK](#) Notify currently has 1,322 services with over half a billion total notifications sent to date (see [here](#)). The benefits of [GOV.UK](#) Notify are primarily driven by HMG only having to incur a cost once instead of multiple times across the 1,322 services. The benefits fall into two broad categories "One-off avoided costs" & "Avoided ongoing costs". These benefits are driven by the number of services adopted across HMG and the transactions of each of those services. Both are forecasted forward based on a combination of statistical techniques using historical data and engagement insight with OGDs.

Jon Trickett:

[\[1565\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many full-time equivalent civil servants worked on delivering the objectives of the Government Transformation Strategy in the most recent three years for which data is available.

Simon Hart:

The Government Transformation Strategy is a cross-government programme of work that touches on all aspects of digital transformation. We estimate that there are approximately 17,000 Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) professionals employed across government and directly supporting delivery of the strategy, in addition to a significant number of non-DDaT civil servants working on related activities.

■ Office for Veterans' Affairs: Costs

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[1606\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was of setting up the Office for Veterans Affairs.

Oliver Dowden:

At the last Spending Round the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that £5 million is being made available for the Office for Veterans' Affairs in 2020/2021. The costs of setting up the Office for Veterans' Affairs were met from existing budgets in the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence, and included time from existing staff.

Furthermore, this does not represent the totality of government spend to support veterans. For example, we recently announced an additional £10 million to support veterans' mental health and wellbeing needs.

■ Public Appointments: Equality

Jon Trickett: [\[1567\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to increase the diversity of public appointments.

Simon Hart:

In June this year, the Government updated its Public Appointments Diversity Action Plan which sets out steps for improving the diversity of public appointees. The Prime Minister remains committed to this plan, including the aspirations that by 2022, 50% of all appointees should be female, and 14% of appointments made should be to those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The latest figures show that 43% of appointees are female compared to 39% in March 2014. The recent report from the Commissioner for Public Appointments shows that 11.9% of appointments made in 2018/19 were to those from ethnic minorities compared to 8% in 2013/2014.

■ Veterans: Mental Health

Chris Ruane: [\[1592\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department is taking steps to incorporate mindfulness and wellbeing into support for veterans provided by the Office for Veterans' Affairs.

Oliver Dowden:

The Government already provides significant support to veterans through mental health and wellbeing services, including through an additional £10m to support Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing needs announced in autumn 2018. The NHS in England has developed two bespoke services, the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service and the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Services.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs will be working to join up such services across government and collaborating closely with service charities to ensure that veterans can access the mental health and well-being support they need.

Health and wellbeing is also one of the key areas set out in the *Strategy for our Veterans*, on which we worked closely with the Devolved Administrations. One of the Office's first tasks will be to produce a detailed work programme informed by the responses to the consultation on this Strategy.

DEFENCE**■ Antisubmarine Warfare****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to improve the Royal Navy's anti-submarine warfare capability.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Royal Navy continually reviews Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities. This will be enhanced by the introduction into service of the world-leading, cutting edge technology of the Type-26 ASW frigates and the continuing roll-out of the Astute class submarines. HMS ASTUTE, HMS AMBUSH and HMS ARTFUL are already in service, with HMS AUDACIOUS, HMS ANSON, HMS AGAMEMNON, and HMS AGINCOURT to follow.

The RAF P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft will also play an intrinsic role as part of an integrated force to enhance maritime security and anti-submarine warfare. It will be fully integrated with other Royal Navy and NATO ASW assets. RAF Lossiemouth is preparing to welcome nine P-8A aircraft from 2020. They will be integrated into a £132 million strategic support facility with capacity to support Joint Expeditionary Force allies.

■ Bahrain: Military Bases**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding has been allocated to Royal Navy facilities in Bahrain since 2014.

Mark Lancaster:

The Royal Navy maintains a presence in the Kingdom of Bahrain to provide support for our deployed naval force in the Gulf, enabling our maritime security commitment for Bahrain, the wider region, and the global economy. This deployed force is supported by the UK National Support Facility (UK NSF). Since 2014, the money spent on this facility totals approximately £27 million.

■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations**Martin Docherty-Hughes:**[\[1694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department consulted the Sub-Saharan Africa National Security Strategy Implementation Group and Whitehall Africa Group on the deployment of UK armed forces to the UN mission in Mali.

Mark Lancaster:

The Sub-Saharan Africa National Security Strategy Implementation Group and Whitehall Africa Group were consulted throughout the policy development process, and presented their recommendations to the National Security Council where the deployment of UK forces to the UN mission in Mali was considered.

■ Ministry of Defence: Energy Supply**Nic Dakin:**[\[533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 291002 and to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 290324, if he will introduce the same policy as the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and switch to an electricity provider that supplies electricity solely from renewable resources within the next 12 months; and for what reason his Department has not already ensured its electricity is supplied solely from renewable resources.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to supporting and playing its part in the UK Government intent to tackle climate change by transitioning to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The MOD uses the mandated Crown Commercial Services energy framework to procure the supply of electricity. The framework is designed to achieve the best value for money for the public sector. The current three-year rolling contract is due to expire on 31 March 2022. This contract does not specify a percentage of electricity that should come from renewable sources however, the future contract specification will be reviewed as part of the ongoing planning for delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Procuring and generating renewable and low carbon electricity is part of a suite of measures the Department is pursuing to reduce its emissions. For example, at RAF Marham a new Generating Plant built by Future Biogas now supplies power to the site. Further opportunities to directly source renewable electricity through long term power purchase agreements and on-site generation are also being pursued.

■ Ministry of Defence: Health**Chris Ruane:**[\[914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department uses Office for National Statistics estimates of personal well-being in formulating policy; and what policies his Department has introduced to improve personal well-being in the last 12 months.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) consults relevant National Statistics when formulating policy.

The MOD takes the health and wellbeing of its personnel very seriously. A Health and Wellbeing Strategy for all MOD employees, military and civilian, was published in mid-2015 (updated in August 2016) and is designed to provide guidance to the Chain of Command and civilian line managers on how to manage the health needs, both mental and physical, of their people. The aim is to maximise the number of people fit to work, managing people back to work after a period of sickness, so that they are fit

and able to meet the requirements of Defence outputs, including operational effectiveness.

For personnel returning from conflict, the MOD continues to fund the large scale, ongoing independent study from the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR), King's College London, which has become an important source of data on the impact of deployment on the overall health and wellbeing of military personnel and veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2003, MOD has contributed over £9 million to this study.

A considerable number of research papers, relating to issues such as wellbeing, depression, alcohol abuse, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, can be accessed on the KCMHR area of the King's College London website at <https://www1.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/pubdb/>. This work continues to produce high quality evidence upon which we can make considered decisions about the way we manage and treat our personnel.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Long Service Awards**

David Mundell:

[\[458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what schemes his Department has introduced to recognise the long service of non-military personnel.

Johnny Mercer:

The mechanism by which civil servants are recognised for their long and meritorious service is the Imperial Service Medal, issued by the Cabinet Office. It is presented to selected civil servants who complete at least 25 years' service upon their retirement, to certain grades. In the Ministry of Defence, this is skill zone or Pay Band E grades.

Within the Ministry of Defence, there are likely to be schemes at unit level that are administered locally. A list of any such schemes are not held centrally.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Saudi Arabia**

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[\[1698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) civilian staff in his Department based in the UK, (b) military personnel based in the UK, (c) civilian staff in his Department based in Saudi Arabia and (d) military personnel based in Saudi Arabia were employed on the (i) Saudi Arabian National Guard Communications Project and (ii) Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Project on 1 April 2019.

Mark Lancaster:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for North East Fife (Stephen Gethins) to Question 286284 on 9 September 2019.

Attachments:

1. 286284 - Ministry of Defence: Saudi Arabia [286284 - Ministry of Defence - Saudi Arabia.docx]

■ Trident: Costs**Martin Docherty-Hughes:****[1697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of maintaining the Trident Nuclear Weapons programme in (a) 2019 and (b) the lifetime of that programme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 September 2019 to Question 286283 to the hon. Member for North East Fife (Stephen Gethins).

Attachments:

1. 286283 - Trident [Hansard Extract 9 September 2019 UIN 286283.docx]

■ Veterans: Housing and Mental Health Services**Tracey Crouch:****[975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to support veterans through (a) housing and (b) mental health services.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) works closely with both the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Health and Social Care to ensure that veterans feel supported on these issues. However, the MOD does not have primary responsibility for housing veterans or treating their mental health.

The MOD strongly believes that no-one should be homeless, least of all someone who has served their country. As part of the Strategy for our Veterans and its consultation, the Government has made clear its commitment to tackling rough sleeping and homelessness and ensuring that all veterans have a secure place to live: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategy-for-our-veterans>. There is, however, no substantive evidence to suggest that veterans are over-represented in the homeless population.

The MOD works with other service providers to ensure there is a coordinated and structured approach to homelessness amongst the small minority of veterans who are without homes. Our aim is both to prevent new Service leavers becoming homeless and to provide an effective safety net for existing homeless veterans. Former Service personnel with urgent housing needs are always given high priority for social housing.

Service personnel can also be provided with a certificate of cessation six months before they leave the Armed Forces. The certificate contains the date Service personnel stop being entitled to Service accommodation and can be considered by local authorities as evidence of impending homelessness, arising from cessation of entitlement to Service accommodation. If Service personnel think they will become homeless they can show the certificate to their Local Authority, which will then conduct an assessment of individual housing needs.

For those veterans who may be experiencing mental health difficulties, in addition to their mainstream mental health services NHS England has commissioned two bespoke services. The first is the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) which supports serving personnel who need additional support as they are leaving the Armed Forces and veterans who have mental health issues. The TILS is also the entry point to the Complex Treatment Service (CTS), the second service commissioned by NHS England. The CTS is able to provide a range of more intensive care and treatment for veterans with military-related complex mental health difficulties, many of whom will have experienced trauma.

Finally, the new Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) in the Cabinet Office has been created to ensure the full power of Government is harnessed to help veterans. The OVA will use the convening power of the Cabinet Office within Whitehall to ensure better coordination of support. This will include helping veterans access services, such as training, housing, healthcare and mental health services. The OVA will also be a champion for veterans. On 16 October 2019 the Cabinet Office announced the appointment of retired Colonel David Richmond CBE, a former Commanding Officer of 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, who served in Afghanistan and Iraq and subsequently became the Recovery Director at Help for Heroes, to lead the OVA. One of the first tasks of the OVA will be to consider responses to the Strategy for our Veterans public consultation and announce a detailed work programme and implementation plan to take the Strategy forward across the various Government Departments with an interest in veterans' issues.

■ **Veterans: Personation**

Chris Ruane: [\[1594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of online sales of counterfeit military veteran ID cards; and if he will make a statement.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence is not aware of a trade in the sale of counterfeit Veterans' ID Cards and has made no assessment of such sales' trends. If an individual becomes aware of a counterfeit Veterans' ID Card, they should inform their local police force.

■ **Veterans: Railways**

Stephen Morgan: [\[320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the eligibility criteria for the HM Forces Railcard to include armed forces veterans.

Stephen Morgan: [\[321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the merits of introducing a separate railcard for those veterans who do not qualify for existing railcards.

Johnny Mercer:

The Government recognises the commitment which the Armed Forces Community has made to our country and will continue to strive to look after their best interests. There are eight available national railcards, including the Disabled Person Railcard and 26-30 Railcard, which veterans are eligible to apply for if they meet the relevant criteria. All of them offer discounted travel. Transport for London also offers free or discounted travel for veterans in receipt of ongoing payments under the War Pensions Scheme and those who receive Guaranteed Income Payments under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Warships: Computer Software**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[91\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to prepare for the adoption of quantum computing onboard Royal Navy vessels.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Royal Navy aspires to be an early adopter of quantum technology across multiple applications, including at sea. The Service is engaging with academia, industry and international partners while supporting and funding a number of Ministry of Defence research initiatives.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Broadband: Optical Fibres****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has to review requirements to obtain wayleave agreements to install broadband supporting fibre cables on private properties, and what steps she is taking to improve the efficiency of that process.

Matt Warman:

Agreements to install digital communications equipment - including fibre cables - on private land are underpinned by the Electronic Communications Code. My Department reformed the Code in 2017, with the aim of making it cheaper and easier for digital communications apparatus to be deployed. My Department is monitoring the impact of these reforms closely and is working with stakeholders to ensure they achieve their intended effect.

In addition, the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill received its first reading in the House of Commons on 15 October 2019. If enacted, this legislation will create a cheaper and faster process for operators to install fibre needed to provide services to tenants in multiple-dwelling buildings if a landlord repeatedly fails to respond to operator requests for access rights.

■ Business: Data Protection

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate her Department has made of the number of data flow contractual clauses which will need to be arranged by businesses in the UK with businesses in the EU in the event that the UK leaves the EU (a) with and (b) without a deal.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has now agreed the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU. We believe this is the best outcome for all UK sectors. Businesses will not be required to implement standard contractual clauses to ensure the continued free flow of data from the EU/EEA to the UK.

The implementation period will start on 31 October 2019 and last until 31 December 2020. It is important that businesses continue to comply with their existing data protection obligations during this period. There will be no change in compliance responsibilities for organisations or for individual rights. This is because the UK's Data Protection Act 2018 remains in place and EU laws including the GDPR and Law Enforcement Directive will continue to apply in the UK. This means that personal data can flow from and to the European Economic Area just as before the UK's exit.

Looking to the future, both the UK Government and the EU have made clear their intention for the EU to have made adequacy decisions with respect of the UK by the end of the implementation period and for the UK to ensure the comparable facilitation of transfers of personal data to the EU, in the same timeframe, if applicable conditions are met. This would mean that data can flow between the UK and EU without organisations having to put in place other data transfer arrangements.

■ Databases: Finance

Jo Platt:

[\[360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding her Department has allocated to the (a) creation and (b) implementation of the Government Data Strategy.

Nigel Adams:

In June 2018 the Government announced the launch of a National Data Strategy. The team of 13 has been allocated £349,000 for delivery of the strategy and its associated research programme and consultation. There is no budget allocated for the implementation of the strategy. This will be reviewed once the strategy is agreed.

The figures below provide the funding to date.

FY 18/19: £38,000

FY 19/20: £312,000

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Health**Chris Ruane:** **[1589]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 14 September 2018 to Question 171304 on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Health, what indicators his Department uses that are informed by wellbeing data and policies his Department has introduced that are based on that data.

Nigel Adams:

Our Annual Report, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18> (pages 12-51) outlines the wellbeing indicators that are used by DCMS in our policymaking and evaluation. We have introduced various policies to improve wellbeing across the UK. The Civil Society Strategy, published on 9 August 2018, sets out how government will work with and for civil society in the long-term to create a country that works for everyone. The Culture Investment Fund, announced on 12 October, has recently pledged £250 million of new funding for the culture and creative sector, with more than £90m provided to extend the Cultural Development Fund which uses investment in heritage, culture and creativity to drive regeneration and growth.

■ Elections: Fraud**Mr Jim Cunningham:** **[1542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, what recent representations she has made to social media companies on the dissemination of misinformation from fraudulent accounts during elections.

Matt Warman:

The Government is working closely with industry, civil society and international partners to do what is necessary to prevent the use of online disinformation to undermine our democratic values and processes. Ministers and officials have regular meetings with social media companies on countering disinformation, including during elections. We welcome the measures taken by these companies to tackle the spread of disinformation and harmful content on their platforms but recognise that more needs to be done.

■ English Heritage**Mr Jim Cunningham:** **[1543]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to protect English heritage sites from decay and neglect.

Helen Whately:

Historic England, government's statutory advisor on historic environment, compiles an annual Heritage at Risk Register. This indicates what steps the Government is taking to protect sites from decay and neglect, including those in the guardianship of English Heritage.

The 2019 Register, which was published on 17th October 2019, gives an annual snapshot of the critical condition of some of the country's most important historic buildings, sites, monuments and places. In total there are 5,073 entries on the 2019 Register, 87 fewer than in 2018.

Throughout England, 310 sites have been removed from the Register because their future has been secured, often by community intervention and a partnership approach. Over the past year, Historic England has spent nearly £8.5m in grants on helping some of the country's best loved and most important historic sites. This work continues, and we see many examples where bringing endangered historic sites and structures back to beneficial use has demonstrable economic and community benefits, and thus public value.

■ Gardens: Tourism

Andrew Bridgen:

[620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to respond to the recommendations made by the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee in its Fourteenth Report of Session 2017-19 entitled Garden design and tourism, HC 2002.

Helen Whately:

We submitted our full response to the Select Committee on October 1st 2019. This was published on October 10th 2019.

■ Government Departments: Digital Technology

Jo Platt:

[355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, what progress the Government has made in it's proposal to reduce the duplication of citizen data across Government as stated in the Government Transformation Strategy 2017-2020.

Nigel Adams:

The GDPR and Data Protection Act came into effect in 2018 and enshrines key principles of purpose limitation and data minimisation in the processing of personal data. Government is currently preparing a statutory code of practice for government departments and public sector organisations to provide guidance on compliance with GDPR.

Additionally, in May this year, the Government Digital Service updated their Digital Service Standards. These standards are publicly available and give users permission to copy, distribute and use technology freely or at a low cost avoiding the need for duplication across government. Furthermore we will publish a National Data Strategy, which will set out how government will improve its approach to the handling and use of data.

■ Huawei: 5G**Jo Platt:** [\[1136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 7 October 2019 to Question 292999 on Huawei: 5G, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to telecoms networks arising from the delay of a decision on Huawei's involvement in UK 5G.

Matt Warman:

The Government consulted with industry as part of the Telecoms Supply Chain Review, published in July, which set out proposals for a new framework for telecoms security. The Review also considered the issue of high risk vendors. A decision on this will be made in due course.

■ Musical instruments: Customs**Patrick Grady:** [\[1715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of compensating musicians for the additional costs incurred through travelling to the EU with instruments and equipment in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Nigel Adams:

Our cultural and creative sectors are one of the UK's greatest success stories. We will ensure that these sectors continue to thrive and that collaboration with our European partners continues to flourish beyond our exit from the EU. Journeys and routes around the EU are varied and unique to each musician.

However, we have engaged extensively with the cultural sector, and understand the diverse circumstances of companies, organisations and individual practitioners and how they may need to adapt as we leave the EU. These include changes for visas, social security and movement of equipment, including instruments when moving around the EU. We are working with other colleagues across government to ensure these are factored into our preparations and future negotiations.

The Government has now agreed the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU. We believe this is the best outcome for all UK sectors.

■ Pornography: Internet**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[1762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much her Department has spent from the public purse on its proposals for age verification for online pornography .

Matt Warman:

Since 2016, the government has spent approximately £2.2million on this policy. These objectives will now be delivered through our wider online harms work. It is only right that government has invested to prepare for a child protection measure. This is

now a key part of our online harms agenda and we will be reviewing how our work so far can be incorporated into the proposed online harms regime.

■ Subscriptions: Misrepresentation

Alex Chalk:

[348]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking with the Advertising Standards Authority to ensure subscription services do not mislead consumers into signing up for their services when they make a purchase through a website.

Nigel Adams:

Advertising in the UK is regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), which enforces the Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing (CAP Code) in non-broadcast media, including online, print, outdoors, video-on-demand, direct marketing and cinema, through a system of self-regulation.

The CAP Code incorporates all relevant legislation, and sets standards for accuracy and honesty to which advertisers must adhere, including specific conditions on advertising to children, causing offence and social responsibility. It is regularly reviewed and updated by the industry to ensure it remains effective, and proposed changes to the Code are routinely subject to public consultation.

The Code includes rules designed to ensure that advertisers do not mislead consumers, reflecting that the ASA is recognised by the government, the courts and Trading Standards as the 'established means' for the enforcement of misleading advertising legislation. On the specific issue of subscription traps, the Code also includes rules designed to ensure that advertising for promotions must state all significant conditions likely to affect a consumer's decision to participate in the promotion. The ASA has also published guidance to advertisers on how to ensure that advertising of free trials and other promotional offer subscription models are compliant with the Code.

EDUCATION

■ Adult Education: Fees and Charges

Dan Jarvis:

[174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to extend full fee remission for adult education courses to full time carers under Adult Education Budget rules.

Michelle Donelan:

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) currently supports 3 legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19+, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* - C or grade 4, or higher.
- First full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 - 23.

- First full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 - 23.

A fourth legal entitlement to fully funded specified digital skills qualifications for adults, aged 19+, with no or low digital skills will come into effect from 1 August 2020.

In addition, the AEB supports delivery of flexible tailored provision for adults up to level 2 which is either fully funded or co-funded depending on a learner's age, prior attainment and circumstances.

For the 2019/20 academic year, the AEB is continuing a trial to support those in work on low incomes, which allows providers to fully fund eligible learners on low wages, who would otherwise be eligible for co-funding. The trial will apply in respect of learners who are resident outside of devolved areas.

From August 2019, approximately 50% of the AEB has been devolved to 6 Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Mayor of London, through the Greater London Authority. They are now responsible for commissioning and funding AEB provision for learners resident in their areas.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) remains responsible for funding learners resident in non-devolved areas. For those learners, we will continue to consider how we can most effectively support learners. However, currently there are no current plans to extend full fee remission to full time carers under the ESFA AEB funding rules.

■ Apprentices and Training: Peterborough

Ms Lisa Forbes:

[378]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the availability of (a) apprenticeships and (b) re-training opportunities in Peterborough for former staff of Thomas Cook's headquarters.

Michelle Donelan:

We are working to ensure that Thomas Cook apprentices who have been affected are supported to complete their apprenticeship. Apprentices who were previously at Thomas Cook and have any queries relating to their apprenticeship can email a dedicated enquiry mailbox: ThomasCook.QUERIES@education.gov.uk.

The Education Skills and Funding Agency is in touch with all the training providers who are supporting the apprentices across the country, including those in Peterborough, and we will continue to liaise with them on this matter. A number of employers in the sector and in related areas have already stepped forward to offer job opportunities to apprentices, including Hayes Travel that has bought the 555 Thomas Cook shops which will safeguard up to 2,500 jobs.

The National Careers Service will provide information, advice and guidance to help all former Thomas Cook staff with decisions on learning, training and work:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>.

■ Education: Finance**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which of his Department's programmes he plans to allocate funding for from the soft drinks industry levy in the next 12 months.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to improving children's health using the funding raised through the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL). This has included using the funding to double the Physical Education (PE) and Sport Premium to £320 million to improve the quality of PE in primary schools. The Department will continue to provide £320 million in academic year 2019-20. Funding from this levy has also been put towards school breakfast clubs, which have helped the most disadvantaged children in society to have a healthy meal at the start of the day.

The Department will set out the plans for the future spending of SDIL funds in due course.

■ Erasmus+ Programme**Carol Monaghan:**[\[1723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the planned replacement Erasmus+ scheme for 2020-21 in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal will be open to all students across the UK that would have previously been eligible.

Chris Skidmore:

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

If it is in the UK's interest, we will seek to participate in some specific EU programmes as a third country. The draft political declaration envisages the possibility of UK participation in EU programmes like Erasmus+ and the negotiation of general terms of participation. However, my officials are preparing for all eventualities, including no deal, and they are considering a wide range of options with regard to the future of international exchange. These include potential domestic alternatives to the Erasmus+ programme for the 2020/21 academic year and beyond, should we need them.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance**Lucy Powell:**[\[1676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made adequacy of maintained nursery school budgets when the supplementary funding for the 2019-20 academic year ends.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises that maintained nursery schools are an important part of the early years sector and that they provide valuable services to disadvantaged children.

The Government invests approximately £60 million of supplementary funding each financial year for local authorities to preserve the funding rates of maintained nursery schools.

The Government plans to spend £3.6 billion to support early education in the financial year 2020-21 and details of how this is to be distributed across local authorities will be issued shortly.

Private Education: West Midlands

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) partial bursary places and (b) full bursary places were awarded by independent schools in (i) Edgbaston, (ii) Birmingham and (iii) the West Midlands in each of the last five years.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 3 September 2019 to Question 282372, what steps she is taking to encourage independent schools to work in partnership with state-funded schools.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 3 September 2019 to Question 282372, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of (a) full bursary places and (b) partial bursary places awarded by independent schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has agreed a joint understanding with the Independent Schools Council to encourage more independent schools to work in partnership with state-funded schools across four key areas: governance, teaching, curriculum and targeted school improvement. The Department is supporting the growth of partnerships across these four areas, through a dedicated unit within the Department.

To further strengthen this work, the Department is calling for bids for its cross-sector partnerships grant, which opened on 9 October 2019. This grant aims to raise the ambition for what schools can achieve together, and to remove a key financial barrier to new high-impact, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnerships forming.

The Department does not hold information on the number and type of bursaries offered by independent schools. In accordance with the joint understanding, and in addition to its work on partnerships, the Department will continue to work with the Independent Schools Council to encourage its member schools to offer a greater number of full bursary places, targeted at children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

■ Schools: Private Finance Initiative

Philip Davies: [123]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the (a) annual income and (b) annual payment for a PFI scheme was for each school in the Bradford district in the last year for which figures are available.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested regarding annual income refers to third party income earned in respect of a private finance initiative (PFI) contract. Information on third party income for any PFI scheme is not held by the Department. This information may be available directly from the local authority.

The annual payment (or unitary charge) is not available for individual schools as there is one unitary charge payment for each PFI project which may contain multiple schools.

Information on PFI projects as at March 2018 is published by HM Treasury and includes details of the unitary charge for all education PFI schemes. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-finance-initiative-and-private-finance-2-projects-2018-summary-data>.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Angela Rayner: [1678]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the (a) membership and (b) terms of reference of the working group on sex and relationships education.

Angela Rayner: [1679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the process was to determine the membership of the working group on relationships and sex education.

Angela Rayner: [1680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to issue guidance to all schools on implementing relationships and sex education.

Angela Rayner: [1681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to involve third sector organisations in developing the teaching materials on (a) consent, (b) HIV, (c) sexual health and (d) mental health for the new relationships and sex education curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to supporting schools to deliver high quality teaching of relationships education for all primary aged pupils, relationships and sex education for all secondary aged pupils, and health education for all pupils in state-funded schools.

From spring 2020, all teachers will have access to a central programme of support that will focus on tools to enhance practice and teacher confidence, including an implementation guide, access to high-quality resources, and training that can be delivered online and face to face.

The Department has been working with schools, teachers and sector experts to develop support materials that are suited to the sector's needs and that will enable the delivery of the entire statutory guidance including areas such as consent, HIV, sexual health and mental health. The Department will continue to engage with the wide range of stakeholders that have helped informed key decisions on these subjects.

To support this work, the Department has convened a new working group, who will provide insight into how the new guidance is working in practice. This group, with representatives from teaching unions, sector experts, faith and minority groups, parents and young people, provides us with evidence and feedback to improve the delivery of these subjects. The working group met for the first time in September and the Department intends to publish the membership and terms of reference on GOV.UK in due course.

■ **Sex and Relationship Education: Finance**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the £6 million of funding allocated for the implementation of Relationships and Sex Education in England's schools in 2019-20 will be succeeded by further funding for 2020-21; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to supporting schools to deliver high quality teaching of relationships education in primary schools, relationships and sex education in secondary schools, and health education in all state-funded schools. The Department has committed to investing in a programme of support for schools to deliver these subjects and this will continue into 2020/21, including implementation guidance, access to high quality resources and training support. We are working closely with schools and teachers to develop this programme of support, so that it's suited to their needs.

■ **Students: Loans**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress the Government has made on introducing a Takaful-based university fee funding structure.

Chris Skidmore:

The government remains committed to introducing an Alternative Student Finance product for tuition fee and maintenance support. Details on implementation will follow the conclusion of the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding.

■ Vocational Education: Class Sizes

Dan Jarvis: [R] [170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to reduce class sizes in vocational further education courses.

Michelle Donelan:

Decisions on the organisation of the curriculum, including class sizes, are a matter for further education providers. They are accountable for the quality of education through Ofsted inspection and published performance measures. When making these decisions they must also consider the workload and well-being of their staff. The government will provide an additional £400 million for 16-19 education next year which will help with resourcing of all courses for young people, including vocational provision.

■ Vocational Education: Finance

Dan Jarvis: [R] [169]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to increase funding for vocational further education courses; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

The government announced on 31 August 2019 that it will invest an extra £400 million in 16-19 education in 2020-21. This is the biggest injection of new money in a single year since 2010 and represents an increase of 7% in overall 16-19 funding. As part of this, the base rate of funding for all types of providers will be increased by 4.7% in academic year 2020-21, from £4,000 to £4,188. This extra funding will support all types of courses, including vocational subjects and as part of this, we have now announced that T Levels funding rates will also be increased by 4.7%.

The funding settlement for further education for adults aged 19 and over will be confirmed in due course. Additionally, funding for 2021-22 onwards will be considered in the full Spending Review next year.

■ Vocational Guidance: Schools and Further Education

Mrs Sharon Hodgson: [137]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on how many occasions his Department has taken action against a school or college as a result of providing poor or no careers guidance.

Michelle Donelan:

Careers education is steadily improving across the country following publication of our careers strategy in December 2017.

We publish statutory guidance for schools and colleges, which sets out what they should do to provide independent careers guidance for year 8-13 students. This includes the requirement, commonly known as the Baker Clause, for schools to

publish a policy statement, showing the opportunities for technical education and apprenticeship providers to talk to all year 8-13 pupils.

When we have found instances of non-compliance with these statutory duties, we have taken action. In January 2019, the former Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills (Anne Milton), my right hon. Friend for Guilford, wrote to 5 of the largest multi-academy trusts that had not yet published arrangements for provider access on all their academy websites to ask them to act to comply with the law. We also encourage providers to contact us if they are experiencing difficulties or have been blocked from going into schools, and we address this in such cases by writing to individual schools.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Carbon Emissions

Alan Brown:

[730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department has taken to establish (a) a baseline for existing carbon dioxide emissions from agriculture (b) an agreed methodology for measuring emissions and (c) a pathway for zero emissions by 2050 and a methodology for assessing progress towards that target; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

a) In the UK, agricultural Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions statistics are calculated and updated annually, with the data forming part of the UK's National GHG Inventory. The UK's reporting methodology is built on scientific understanding developed through the joint Defra-Devolved Administration funded £12.6m Agricultural GHG Research Platform. As such it accurately reflects and captures UK agricultural conditions and practices.

Government also publishes emissions data online, the most recent update from April this year is available here:

<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/9a1e58e5-d1b6-457d-a414-335ca546d52c/provisional-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics>

b) The methodology used to estimate emissions from agriculture is compliant with guidelines set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This ensures transparency, accuracy, completeness and allows comparisons between countries. Along with 193 other signatories to the Paris Agreement, the UK has committed to using a common approach on emissions reporting, which is vital for robust and consistent reporting of global GHG emissions reductions.

c) On 27 June, the UK became the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding target to achieve net zero [100% reductions] GHG emissions from across the UK economy by 2050, bound by the Climate Change Act. The Act also introduced carbon budgets which cap emissions over successive 5-year periods and must be set 12 years in advance.

The Committee on Climate Change, our independent advisors, assesses emissions data to judge whether the UK is on course to meet its carbon budgets, and reports this progress to Parliament and the Devolved Administrations annually. The Government then has a statutory obligation to respond to this advice, laying out the progress and policies underway to meet our targets.

This week the Government announced that a new independent Office for Environmental Protection will be established to scrutinise environmental policy and law. The office's powers will cover all climate change legislation and hold the Government to account on its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

The Government recognises the importance of reducing emissions further in the food, farming and land use sectors. The Clean Growth Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan set out the Government's ambition for how this will be achieved, including through environmental land management, strengthening biosecurity and control of endemic diseases in livestock, and encouraging use of low emissions fertilisers.

This year we have started developing a new emissions reduction plan for agriculture, in which we will set out our long-term vision for a more productive, low-carbon farming sector in England.

Our new Environmental Land Management Scheme will be underpinned by payment of public money for the provision of environmental public goods. Trees and woodland can contribute to numerous environmental goods and services. Activities to be paid for may include tree planting and woodland creation, and woodland management, including through natural regeneration. Trees and woodlands have multiple benefits and can contribute to many of the environmental outcomes we want to achieve, including mitigation of and adaption to climate change.

■ **Agriculture: Seasonal Workers**

Alex Norris:

[\[1778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the outcomes of the seasonal workers pilot scheme since that scheme opened; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

Defra and the Home Office have established a regime to monitor and evaluate the Pilot against its objectives and expected benefits. We will publish the outcomes of the Pilot evaluation process for both the first year and the second year of the Pilot once those evaluations are complete.

Alex Norris:

[\[1779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many workers have (a) entered and (b) left the UK under the seasonal workers pilot scheme.

George Eustice:

As of June 2019, Pilot operators had recruited all 2,500 workers and the majority of these workers have entered the UK. Visa applications will continue throughout the year and some workers will be required for later in the season for the harvesting of winter vegetables. Return rates will be carefully monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation of this Pilot.

Alex Norris:[\[1780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the geographical distribution by region is of workers that have entered the UK under the seasonal workers pilot scheme.

George Eustice:

This is a nationwide Pilot, with a nationwide quota. We have placed a specific duty on the selected scheme operators to ensure that all regions of the UK benefit from this Pilot and we are monitoring the distribution of workers across the four regions of the UK: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Pilot monitoring information that we have received to date shows that the spread across these regions is proportionate with regional demand.

Alex Norris:[\[1781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether her Department has received all information that operators are required to provide from the Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme.

George Eustice:

The collation of information and data to monitor the Pilot is ongoing. The Pilot operators are working cooperatively with Defra and the Home Office to provide information for the effective monitoring and evaluation of the Pilot and have to date provided all required information.

Alex Norris:[\[1782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many inspections the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority has undertaken on farms employing workers under the seasonal workers pilot scheme.

George Eustice:

The Home Office are best placed to answer any queries about the requirements and obligations on the scheme operators to safeguard Pilot workers including the number of inspections performed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

■ Bottles: Recycling**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to introduce a bottle deposit scheme to increase the number of plastic bottles reused and recycled.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is minded to introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers from 2023, subject to further evidence and analysis.

■ **Chemicals: Regulation****Chris Ruane:**[\[453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the cost to the public purse was of setting up the IT system for UK REACH; and what estimate she has been made of projected spend on that system in each of the next five years.

Rebecca Pow:

Comply with UK REACH is the new IT system that will underpin the independent chemicals regime UK REACH. The cost of establishing this system and preparing it to facilitate the needs of UK REACH on Day 1 of our exit from the EU has been to date £14.32 million.

Annual running costs of *Comply with UK REACH* for the next five years will depend on the pace and extent of future development and the future relationship negotiated between the UK and EU.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Equal Pay****Chris Stephens:**[\[1728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many equal pay reviews there have been in her Department since 2010; what the dates were of those reviews; and whether her Department plans to undertake an equal pay review in 2019.

George Eustice:

Since 2010, Defra has undertaken two equal pay reviews. These were in April 2010 and February 2015. Defra is currently undertaking an equal pay review, and this should be completed in 2019.

■ **Environment Agency: Inspections****Caroline Lucas:**[\[1656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of site inspections carried out by the Environment Agency in each year since 2014.

Rebecca Pow:

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

■ **Environment Agency: Staff**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[1655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of Environment Agency FTE staff on (a) temporary and (b) permanent contracts in each year from 2009; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The below table shows the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) in ENGLAND ONLY from 2009:

Year	A) DIRECTLY		B) CONTRACTED BASIS		Total
	Perm Employees	Fixed Term Contract Employees	Employment Agency Staff	Contractors	
09/10	10,918	359	429	452	12,158
10/11	10,063	105	209	135	10,512
11/12	9,816	158	516	139	10,628
12/13	10,345	310	487	216	11,358
13/14	10,068	207	218	114	10,608
14/15	9,624	113	343	154	10,235
15/16	9,556	117	275	391	10,340
16/17	9,839	264	185	607	10,896
17/18	9,174	316	233	283	10,006
18/19	9,577	296	297	260	10,429
September 2019	9,793	351	293	267	10,705

The changes in the number of staff who work at the Environment Agency represent the Spending Review settlements and income received from charge payers.

In addition, please note the following:-

In November 2017 896 FTE transferred to Defra Corporate Services under a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) arrangement.

■ European Chemicals Agency

Stephen Crabb: [\[128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government is seeking to remain a member of European Chemicals Agency after the UK leaves the EU.

Stephen Crabb: [\[129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of the UK staying aligned to the REACH chemical regulations after the UK leaves the EU.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to an ambitious, broad, deep and flexible economic partnership with the EU. We want a deal that allows us to be in control of our own laws. The details of this partnership, including the possibility of cooperation with relevant European Chemicals Agency, including on REACH, will be a matter for negotiation with the EU after we leave the European Union.

We are preparing for that negotiation and will work with a wide range of partners to ensure a successful outcome for UK business and citizens.

Stephen Crabb: [\[130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she has received from industry on the UK's ongoing relationship with the European Chemicals Agency after the UK leaves the EU.

Stephen Crabb: [\[131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she has received from industry on the effect of divergence from REACH regulations after the UK leaves the EU.

Rebecca Pow:

Ministers and officials have been engaging throughout the UK with businesses of all sizes and their representatives and trade associations to ensure we understand the sector's priorities for our future relationship with the EU, including its priorities relating to European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).

We have heard these views from businesses in meetings, correspondence and at large scale stakeholder events. Through this engagement we have also heard of industry's concerns of the potential impacts to business and disruption to supply chains resulting from divergence from the EU REACH regulations.

We recognise the importance of the EU trade to the Chemicals sector and will continue to work, up to and after our exit from the EU with a wide range of partners to ensure a successful outcome for UK business and citizens.

■ Fisheries**Luke Pollard:** [\[688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to ensure the enforcement of UK fishing waters in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

George Eustice:

Although fisheries control and enforcement is a devolved matter, we are working closely with the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure a coordinated approach to fisheries control and enforcement across UK waters.

In England, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has assessed the risk of increased illegal fishing when the UK leaves the EU, including under the scenario of doing so without a deal, and strengthened our resources accordingly. This includes an increase to the number of frontline warranted officers, increased aerial surveillance and further vessels to enhance patrolling capacity at sea. The MMO is working with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on a common approach to control and enforcement where appropriate.

■ Food: Packaging**Nic Dakin:** [\[524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a mandatory and consistent (a) UK-wide logo and (b) on pack information for compostable food packaging; and what plans her Department has to introduce such a policy.

Nic Dakin: [\[525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits for (a) reducing littering and (b) increasing recycling rates by (i) banning food producers from using the term biodegradable on food packaging and (ii) introducing a standard definition of the term with respect to the time-frame in which products must fully decompose.

Nic Dakin: [\[526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to require that specific packaging items must be compostable; and whether she has any plans to do so.

Rebecca Pow:

The Resources and Waste Strategy analysed the challenges currently facing the recycling industry in this country, setting out how we would tackle these challenges. Building on commitments in the Strategy we launched a consultation earlier this year on reforming the packaging producer responsibility system, as part of that consultation the Government proposed a mandatory UK-wide labelling system that

provides clear information to help people to recycle. Following strong support for the proposal from consultation respondents, the Government is minded to take forward a mandatory labelling scheme subject to further analysis and legal considerations. Defra officials are exploring how a mandatory labelling scheme can address consumer confusion about what to do with compostable packaging. The consultation closed on 13 May and the summary of responses and next steps can be found via the below link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/packaging-waste-changing-the-uk-producer-responsibility-system-for-packaging-waste>

The Government recognises that innovation into compostable and biodegradable plastics could help reduce the environmental impacts of plastics if they are disposed of in the right way. However, this is often not the case. If these plastics are put in the domestic waste bin, for example, they are likely to end up in landfill and can break down to release powerful greenhouse gases, such as methane. If mistakenly recycled with other plastics, they have the potential to damage the quality of the new products made from the recycled plastic. Furthermore, concerns persist that plastics which are claimed to be biodegradable, if littered or otherwise released into the environment in an uncontrolled way, may not degrade quickly or at all, and they can only be composted if they meet relevant standards.

As a consequence of these concerns, the Government published a call for evidence in July 2019 to help consider the development of standards or certification criteria for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics as well as to better understand their effects on the environment and our current waste system. The call for evidence closed on the 14 October 2019 and we are currently analysing the responses received to inform future policy. We currently do not have plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the matter of requiring any form of plastic packaging to be compostable.

■ Natural England

Caroline Lucas:

[1654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate she has made of (a) the cost to Natural England of monitoring sites of special scientific interest, (b) the number of Natural England FTE staff on (i) temporary and (ii) permanent contracts and (c) the amount her Department has awarded Natural England in its core grant-in-aid for each year since 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England's costs for *Site of Special Scientific Interest* (SSSI) monitoring consist of external spend of £0.2 million and internal staff time of £0.5 million (which includes landscape monitoring). The projected staff numbers for the end of the financial year 19/20 are (i) temporary full-time equivalent (FTE) of 88 and (ii) permanent FTE of 1,656.

Defra has awarded Natural England (NE) core grant-in-aid for each year since 2009 as shown in the table below. Natural England also receives ring-fenced grant-in-aid

from Defra, some grant-in-aid from other Government Departments and income from other sources. This additional funding is for specific projects.

Over the last 5 years NE's Grant in Aid budget has reduced by nearly 50%, but the fall in total expenditure is about 25% when increases in other NE income are taken into account - close to the Defra Group average of 23% across the same period. NE no longer has responsibility for management of the Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship schemes; although it continues to provide advice under these schemes.

YEAR	£'M
2009/10	212.8
2010/11	220.3
2011/12	172.4
2012/13	174.1
2013/14	138.0
2014/15	109.9
2015/16	94.6
2016/17	83.3
2017/18	79.8
2018/19	71.9
2019/20	60.5

■ Nightjars: Conservation

Alistair Burt:

[48]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the findings of the 2016 Joint Nature Conservation Committee review of Special Protection Areas, (a) what representations she has received on completing and (b) what steps she is taking to complete the network of Special Protection Areas for the nightjar.

Rebecca Pow:

Several Members have enquired about the protection of specific wild bird species with reference to the findings of the 2016 review of Special Protection Areas (SPA). The answers are available on the Parliamentary website.

Defra officials, in liaison with Natural England, are finalising an assessment of how best to implement the SPA review in England. This draws on the advice and options set out in the second phase of the Review in 2017. It will include advice on how to

prioritise implementation to achieve the best conservation outcomes including for nightjar.

■ Packaging: Recycling

Chris Elmore: [328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the clarity of the information on recycling provided on the packaging of products sold in supermarkets.

Rebecca Pow:

We do not collect data on the clarity of information about recycling on product packaging sold in supermarkets.

Chris Elmore: [329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions her officials have had with representatives of supermarkets on the (a) presence and (b) clarity of information on recycling on product packaging.

Rebecca Pow:

As stated in our recently published summary of responses to our consultation on reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819467/epr-consult-sum-resp.pdf) we are minded to take forward, subject to further analysis and legal considerations, our proposal to introduce a mandatory labelling scheme in which all packaging is identified as 'recyclable' or 'not recyclable'. This proposal was discussed during a policy workshop in April 2019 which was attended by a number of supermarket representatives.

Paul Farrelly: [82]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of obligating all retailers to ensure that the packaging of products they sell can be recycled locally before stocking those products.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has recently consulted on a package of measures to overhaul the waste and recycling system, including proposed reforms to the packaging producer responsibility system which will incentivise producers, including retailers, to make better, more sustainable decisions when designing and using packaging including using packaging that can be easily recycled. This consultation also proposed a mandatory UK-wide labelling scheme that provides clear information to help people to recycle, and improved communication campaigns funded by packaging producers to help consumers to know what and how to recycle. We will take primary powers in the Environment Bill to enable us to implement new extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems.

In addition, we have consulted on measures to achieve greater consistency in recycling provision across England, so that there is less confusion over how the

packaging that retailers do sell can be recycled. The measures in both consultations will be implemented in 2023 and will be complimentary.

■ Pigs: Diseases

Sir Greg Knight:

[503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to reduce incidents of swine dysentery; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

The government works closely with the farming industry and other partners on endemic disease to enable the industry to take the lead, which is an important component of any disease control scheme. APHA is in regular contact with industry about the recent outbreaks and has issued information on the disease which is available at <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/surveillance/diseases/swine-dysentery.pdf>.

In addition, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) funds surveillance of multiple pig diseases, including Swine Dysentery, and publishes quarterly reports on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pig-gb-disease-surveillance-and-emerging-threats-report-2019>). The APHA has also participated in research into antimicrobial resistance and characterisation of *Brachyspira hyodysenteriae*, the bacteria known to cause Swine Dysentery.

■ Plastics: Waste

Laura Smith:

[653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to reduce plastic waste in fast food outlets.

Rebecca Pow:

The Resources and Waste Strategy set out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste, including from fast food outlets. We will do this by making producers more responsible for the products they put on the market, starting with reforming the packaging waste regulations. We recently consulted on proposals to reform the packaging producer responsibility system to ensure that packaging producers fund the full net cost of managing the packaging they place on the market once it becomes waste. This will provide a strong financial incentive for packaging producers to make more sustainable decisions at the design stage and during manufacture, and to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products.

In general, we prefer to help people and companies make the right choice, rather than banning items outright. There may, however, be times when a ban is appropriate as part of a wider strategic approach. Which is why we are introducing measures to restrict the supply of plastic drink stirrers, plastic-stemmed cotton buds and plastic straws, which are commonly provided in fast food outlets, in April 2020. We will

continue to review the latest evidence on problematic single-use plastic products to take a systematic approach to reducing their use.

In April last year, the Waste and Resources Action Programme and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation launched their world-leading UK Plastics Pact, with support from the Government, and some major fast food corporations such as McDonalds have signed up to it. The Pact brings these organisations together with four key targets for 2025 that aim to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated, including action to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging items. Our proposed reforms will support the Pact in achieving those targets.

■ **Ragwort Control Act 2003**

Sir Greg Knight:

[504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how the effectiveness of the Ragwort Control Act 2003 is assessed; how frequently that assessment take place; what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of that Act; and if she will make a statement.

George Eustice:

We have not made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Ragwort Control Act 2003, as this Act amends the Weeds Act 1959 by inserting a provision enabling the Secretary of State to produce statutory guidance in the form of a 'code of practice' on how to prevent the spread of ragwort. The Secretary of State, published a code of practice in 2004 and this is available on the gov.uk website.

Defra injurious weeds policy aims to balance a variety of different interests in the countryside. This is reflected in the published 'Code of Practice on how to prevent the spread of ragwort'.

Natural England is the responsible authority for investigating complaints about injurious weeds, and collects data on injurious weeds complaints to monitor the number of complaints in each season. This data is reviewed annually by Defra and Natural England and from the 2018 season this data is available on data.gov.uk.

■ **Recycling**

Stephen Morgan:

[691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure consistency between local authorities on the waste that they collect for recycling.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to ensuring there is a comprehensive and consistent recycling service across England. The Environment Bill, published on 15 October, introduces legislation that will ensure local authorities collect a core set of recyclable materials from households from 2023.

■ Recycling: High Rise Flats

Stephen Morgan: [\[689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of high-rise accommodation without a waste shoot that allows for recycling separation on (a) residents' ability to recycle and (b) UK efforts to tackle climate change; and if she will make a statement.

Stephen Morgan: [\[690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to make it easier for people who live in high-rise accommodation to recycle.

Rebecca Pow:

The Resources and Waste Strategy published in December 2018 includes a commitment for a comprehensive range of recycling materials to be collected from all properties from 2023. We know that recycling materials are already collected successfully from many blocks of flats. However, there is limited data on which properties have chute systems so at the moment it is difficult to assess how far recycling separation is possible in a building without a waste chute. Work is underway to improve data capture on a range of high-density property types.

Resource London (a joint London Waste and Recycling Board and WRAP initiative) has carried out research to increase recycling from flats and we expect the findings to be published shortly. This information will be helpful to local authorities wishing to improve recycling and complements information that WRAP already provides on recycling from flats.

Measures announced in the recently published Environment Bill will support our commitment to increase consistency in recycling and we will consult on guidance which will include advice on service provision for different property types to improve recycling and to ensure good practice schemes can be implemented in all properties, including high rise accommodation.

■ Sewage: Waste Disposal

Laura Smith: [\[651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to compensate property owners with septic tanks for the expense of (a) upgrading and (b) replacing existing tanks to make their tanks compliant by 1 January 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

There is no financial help available for upgrading or replacing small sewage discharges, regulated under General Binding Rules (GBRs), including for septic tanks if required. However, where the Environment Agency identifies that improvements are required they will agree a reasonable timescale for the improvements to be made with the owner.

All operators of septic tanks are responsible for maintaining them and making sure they don't cause pollution. Untreated sewage harms rivers and wildlife. Discharges from septic tanks have been regulated under UK law for many years and discharges from a septic tank to a watercourse without a permit have not been lawful.

Alongside the GBRs coming into effect in January 2015, a policy target date of 1 January 2020 was set to phase out the remaining discharges directly from septic tanks to watercourses.

Laura Smith:

[652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential financial effect on property owners of changes to septic tank regulations which come into force on 1 January 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

There was a regulatory impact assessment which considered the financial impact of the 2014 regulation changes of the regulatory system for controlling small sewage discharges from septic tanks which can be found here <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/2852/contents>

The outcome of this was a beneficial saving to home owners and businesses as operators of small sewage discharges.

The aim of the changes is to protect water quality and were a means of reducing regulatory burden on primarily home owners and households. They removed the need to register a discharge whilst aiming to ensure maintenance of environmental protection and to prevent discharges causing pollution.

Under polluter pays principle it is an owners responsibility to comply with legislative requirements and to prevent pollution. There are no grants available for homeowners to improve or upgrade their discharges.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ Brexit: Negotiations

Norman Lamb:

[88]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many meetings officials in his Department have had with EU officials in each of the last 12 months.

James Duddridge:

Discussions between senior DExEU officials and their EU counterparts are ongoing. Over 60 engagements have taken place during the past twelve months (not including formal negotiations). This also excludes instances where DExEU senior officials have accompanied Ministers to meetings with EU officials (Member States and Institutions).

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ Armed Conflict: Children****Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support children in conflict zones throughout the world.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK is firmly committed to protecting all children affected by conflict and in particular ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers. The UK is the largest single financial contributor to the Office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), contributing £800,000 over the last five years to her Office and £450,000 for the 2019/20 financial year in support of her mandate. The UK is an active member of the United Nations Working Group on CAAC which leads the international response on child protection, supporting the SRSG's work by applying diplomatic pressure to listed governments and armed groups.

In 2018, the UK endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, a political commitment to reduce the impact of conflict on education, and the Vancouver Principles, a political commitment to operationalise child protection during the conduct of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We continue to support these key instruments. The UK is mainstreaming child protection into its own military deployments through bespoke training. Through the Department for International Development, we are one of the largest bilateral donors to "Education Cannot Wait", an initiative which protects access to education for children in conflict zones.

In November 2019, the UK will host an international conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict. A key focus will be how we can better support children born of sexual violence in conflict, including tackling stigma.

■ Armed Conflict: Civilians**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to UN General Assembly's First Committee on International Disarmament and International Security 2018 joint statement on the impact of explosive weapons in populated areas, whether the UK will become a signatory to that statement before the end of 2019.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Joint Statement on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas presented at last year's UN General Assembly First Committee was a standalone document specific to the 2018 First Committee; it cannot be supported retrospectively.

■ Bahrain: Prisoners

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[1759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief visited Bahraini prisons on his most recent trip to Bahrain to verify the allegations of religious discrimination against Shia inmates.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), Rehman Chishti MP, visited Bahrain on 8-10 October, marking his first official trip in the role. Mr. Chishti did not visit Bahraini prisons, although throughout his visit he did meet religious leaders and visited places of worship and meeting halls from different faiths represented in Bahrain, including the Shia husseinya, to discuss FoRB. His audience with HM King Hamad was an opportunity to further discuss the matter.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[1760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Government of Bahrain on the 8 October 2019 letter of political prisoner Ali AlHajee raising allegations of religious discrimination in Bahraini prisons during the holy month of Muharram.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Foreign and Commonwealth office continues to monitor events in Bahrain closely. We are aware of the case of Ali Al Hajee, including allegations of mistreatment in detention, and have raised the case at a senior level with the Government of Bahrain.

We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to raise them with the appropriate Bahraini human rights oversight body. We continue to encourage the oversight bodies in Bahrain to carry out thorough and swift investigations into any such claims.

■ Foreign Relations: Scotland

Stephen Gethins: [\[1719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on what date he last met the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, Culture and External Affairs; and when he next plans to meet her.

Christopher Pincher:

Since taking office on 24 July 2019, the Foreign Secretary has not had an opportunity to meet the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop. There are no meetings currently scheduled. However, in recent months the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) has supported a number of visits to promote the Scottish Government's international priorities, such as Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop's recent visit in October to Japan for the Rugby World Cup.

The FCO works in partnership with the Offices of the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the Devolved Administrations, on our international priorities. So far this year our Posts have been involved in over 25 visits from Ministers from the Devolved Administrations.

■ Human Rights

Fabian Hamilton: [\[455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has a policy on the support and protection of human rights defenders worldwide.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK strongly supports the rights of human rights defenders worldwide to carry out their work safely and without fear. In July 2019, the UK published the document 'UK Support for Human Rights Defenders' that sets out our ongoing dedication to supporting and protecting human rights defenders worldwide. Our work to support human rights defenders across our global network of posts takes its inspiration from the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; it includes attending trials, making public statements, raising cases privately with the host government, and lobbying for safe and open space for within which civil society and human rights defenders can operate. We also regularly engage with NGO representatives and human rights defenders to discuss the challenges which human rights defenders face and how the UK can best help in overcoming them.

■ Kuwait: Human Rights

Gareth Thomas: [\[409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Kuwaiti counterpart on that country's criminalisation of human rights activists; and if he will make a statement.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Human rights is a British foreign policy priority. The UK recognises Kuwait's positive steps to improve democracy and human rights. However there remain areas of significant concern, including around freedom of expression. The UK continues to monitor the human rights conditions in Kuwait and discusses these matters with the Kuwaiti Government as appropriate.

■ Mexico: Human Rights

David Linden: [\[1775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Government of Mexico to improve protective measures for (a) religious leaders and (b) other human rights defenders.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government continues to engage regularly with the Mexican authorities at Ministerial, official and state levels to discuss human rights, including Freedom of

Religion or Belief (FoRB), and to support a broad human rights agenda in the country. During the Foreign Secretary's first visit to Mexico in August 2019, he raised human rights with his counterpart Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, who expressed his support for working with us bilaterally and multilaterally to protect human rights. Baroness Williams also raised FoRB with Mexican Interior Minister in September 2019. I have also spoken to Deputy Foreign Minister Ventura. At the UN Universal Periodic Review session in November 2018 the United Kingdom made recommendations regarding accountability for human rights violations and addressing impunity for violence against human rights defenders.

■ Mexico: Religious Freedom

David Linden:

[\[1776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Mexican counterpart on religious freedom in Mexico; and what assessment he has made of the attitude in that country towards repeat perpetrators of violence against religious freedom in the communities of (a) Cuamontax del Huazalingo and (b) Mesa Limuntitla in the state of Hidalgo and (c) other parts of Mexico.

Christopher Pincher:

Officials in the British Embassy in Mexico City have regular contact with the Government of Mexico and civil society groups, including Christian Solidarity Worldwide, to help inform our understanding of the human rights situation on the ground, including in matters of Freedom of Religion or Relief (FoRB). We work closely with the Government of Mexico to support a broad human rights agenda. The Foreign Secretary's visit to Mexico in August 2019 offered the opportunity to discuss human rights with his Mexican counterpart and we welcomed their commitment to address the challenges. Baroness Williams raised FoRB with Mexican Interior Minister in September 2019. I have also spoken to my counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Ventura. The Mexican Government, the local UN Human Rights office and local civil society organisations assess that FORB violations are not widespread or endemic, although they do accept there are local incidences of people being affected because of their religious belief.

■ Papua: Diplomatic Service

Catherine West:

[\[1757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether (a) British and (b) other foreign diplomats have been prevented from entering West Papua.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The UK takes a close interest in the situation in Papua. We are aware of reports of temporary restrictions on access for foreign nationals following violent clashes in several cities in Papua and West Papua provinces. Officials from our Embassy have visited Papua this year and plan to do so again.

■ Slavery

Alex Norris: [\[1777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 294234, if he will separate the roles of modern slavery envoy and migration envoy.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

On the 18 October HMG announced the appointment of Jennifer Townson as Modern Slavery and Migration Envoy. Migration and modern slavery are separate issues which are closely linked and this combined envoy role will be able to effectively address these synergies, whilst tackling the different drivers. The Modern Slavery and Migration Envoy will work internationally to enrich our understanding and sharpen our interventions, enabling the UK to be at the forefront in international discussions on both issues.

■ Syria: British Nationals Abroad

Stephen Gethins: [\[1718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his Department's timetable is for the evacuation of British children and their mothers from north east Syria.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK has no consular presence within Syria from which to provide assistance. We will take a case-by-case approach to any requests for consular assistance.

Our advice to any British national abroad who needs emergency help from the British Government is to contact the nearest British Embassy or Consulate, which in this case will be outside Syria. If a minor is unable to do so, a request can be made on their behalf. British nationals can also call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The number is clearly advertised on FCO Syria Travel Advice pages.

■ Syria: Islamic State

Stephen Gethins: [\[1717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his Department's assessment is of when the Government of Syria will assume administrative control of Al Hol and Roj camps in north east Syria.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Our understanding is that Al Hol and Roj remain in control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF, under pressure from the Turkish offensive, reached a military agreement with the Syrian regime on 13 October, resulting in the movement of regime forces into areas controlled by the SDF but to date the SDF maintains administrative control over these areas, including Al Hol and Roj. We continue to monitor developments closely.

■ Yemen: Conflict Resolution

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[1544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps he has taken to help pursue a resolution to the conflict in Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK is deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen. We fully support the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, and urge the parties to engage constructively with this process. On 26 September, the UK co-hosted a political event at the UN General Assembly to coordinate the international community's support for the UN-led peace process and endorse the Special Envoy's plan to begin wider political discussion. On 17 October, the UK Permanent Representative to the UN made a statement to the Security Council regarding the situation in Yemen, where she welcomed the reduction in violations of the Stockholm Agreement and called on all parties to immediately comply with Security Council Resolution 2451.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Acanthamoeba Keratitis: Health Education

Mark Pritchard:

[265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to work with manufacturers of contact lenses to educate people on how to minimise the risk of contracting Acanthamoeba Keratitis.

Jo Churchill:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for monitoring the safety of all healthcare products in the UK.

Following reports of infections that have led to sight loss due to Acanthamoeba Keratitis (AK), the MHRA participated in the Love your Lenses Campaign organised by the General Optical Council with involvement and support from manufacturers and opticians. The main aim of this campaign is to increase the effectiveness of aftercare information given to contact lens wearers. Details of the campaign can be found at the following link:

<https://www.loveyourlenses.com/>

The MHRA's website also highlights the risks of AK and offers guidance and advice for patients to prevent injury and infection. The website can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/medical-devices-information-for-users-and-patients>

In the United Kingdom, the Opticians Act restricts the sale and supply of contact lenses, including 'zero powered' (plano) contact lenses, to registered optometrists, dispensing opticians, and medical practitioners. An optometrist examining a patient

wishing to wear contact lenses has a duty to assess the patient's suitability for contact lenses and provide the patient with an appropriate lens care regimen, including information on the care, wearing, treatment, cleaning and maintenance of the lens or lenses.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Standards

Jonathan Ashworth:

[1672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of patients were seen within four hours in A&E in (a) 2018-19 and (b) each year since 2010-11.

Edward Argar:

NHS Digital and NHS England publishes annual accident and emergency (A&E) activity in National Health Service hospitals at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/hospital-accident--emergency-activity/2018-19>

The percentage of patient attendances spending four hours or less in A&E, 2009-10 to 2018-19 can be found in the following table.

-	% 4 HOURS OR LESS
2009-10	98.3%
2010-11	97.4%
2011-12	96.6%
2012-13	95.9%
2013-14	95.7%
2014-15	93.6%
2015-16	91.9%
2016-17	89.1%
2017-18	88.3%
2018-19	88.0%

Source: NHS England and NHS Digital

■ Air Ambulance Services: Finance

Julian Sturdy:

[561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding he is allocating to air ambulance services.

Edward Argar:

The Autumn 2018 Budget announced £10 million of capital funding to support air ambulance services. This funding has been allocated to nine charities across England with successful bids which represented the best value for money and positive patient impact. The allocation will fund upgrades to seven operational airbases, including training facilities and fundraising headquarters. There were also three successful bids for critical care cars and medical equipment, and one bid for a new helicopter.

■ Blood Cancer: Health Services**Henry Smith:**[\[569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using genomics in healthcare for the diagnosis and treatment of blood cancers.

Caroline Dinéage:

Genomic testing is already in use as part of the diagnostic pathway for blood cancer. Through implementation of the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, NHS England and NHS Improvement are ensuring consistent and equitable access to genomic testing.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out the ambition to embed genomic medicine, including whole genome sequencing, into routine clinical care. It is expected that within the next year whole genome sequencing (WGS) will begin to be available for:

- Seriously ill children likely to have a rare genetic disorder;
- People with one of 21 rare conditions where current evidence supports early adoption of WGS as a diagnostic test; and
- People with specific types of cancer for which there is likely to be the greatest patient benefit from using WGS – children with cancer, sarcoma and acute myeloid leukaemia.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Energy Supply**Nic Dakin:**[\[531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 290332 and to the Answer of 1 October 2019 to Question 290324, if he will introduce the same policy as the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and switch to an electricity provider that supplies electricity solely from renewable resources within the next 12 months; and for what reason his Department has not already ensured its electricity is supplied solely from renewable resources.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Department will continue to use Crown Commercial Services energy frameworks and keep its tariffs under review. The Department will be considering switching to a green tariff in the next 12 months. The Department has previously purchased the standard Crown Commercial Services tariff that is recommended for Departments.

■ Epilepsy: Drugs

Ms Harriet Harman:

[1533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure people living in the London Borough of Southwark with epilepsy can continue to get the medication they need in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Edward Argar:

The Department is doing everything appropriate to prepare for leaving the European Union. We want to reassure patients throughout the United Kingdom that our plans should ensure the uninterrupted supply of medicines and medical products, including those for use in the treatment of epilepsy, once we have left the EU.

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

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

We have been working closely with suppliers to monitor over 300 different epilepsy medicines provided by almost 50 companies and we are pleased to see many are holding stockpiles far beyond the six weeks' additional buffer we requested. We also know that the vast majority of those suppliers with lower levels of stockpiles have already taken action to re-route their supply chains away from the Channel short straits crossings where applicable.

The Department, alongside NHS England and NHS Improvement, is ensuring that there is regular communication with frontline NHS organisations and stakeholders in the health and social care sector regarding our EU exit preparations. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also been holding EU exit roadshows in the lead up to 31 October.

■ Exercise

Stephen Metcalfe:

[216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Government targets for physical activity are accessible to all regardless of age, ability and current health.

Jo Churchill:

The updated Chief Medical Officers' guidelines for physical activity were published in September 2019. These guidelines provide recommendations and targets for

different age groups and for people with disability. Interventions to meet these targets are designed and implemented by local authorities.

■ **General Practitioners: Postnatal Care**

Paul Farrelly: [\[107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage NHS England to add the maternal six week postnatal check to the GP contract so that all new mothers get a full appointment to discuss their mental and physical health.

Jo Churchill:

The potential for a six-week post-natal maternal health check for all mothers is the subject of further work by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

Decisions on changes to the GP contract for 2020/2021 will be made following negotiations between NHS England and the British Medical Association which are due to conclude at the end of 2019.

Support from health visitors and other professionals at the universal 6-8 week review is an important time for assessing the health and wellbeing of new parents, particularly in look for signs of postnatal depression.

Catherine West: [\[299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to implement the recommendation of the National Childbirth Trust's Hidden Half campaign to add a maternal six week postnatal check to the GP contract.

Jo Churchill:

The potential for a six-week post-natal maternal health check for all mothers is the subject of further work by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

Decisions on changes to the GP contract for 2020/2021 will be made following negotiations between NHS England and the British Medical Association which are due to conclude at the end of 2019.

Support from health visitors and other professionals at the universal 6-8 week review is an important time for assessing the health and wellbeing of new parents, particularly in look for signs of postnatal depression.

■ **General Practitioners: Southampton**

Royston Smith: [\[306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure GP surgeries in Southampton are not understaffed.

Jo Churchill:

Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) advises it is supporting a multi-agency approach to workforce planning, recruitment and retention. The local general practitioner (GP) federation continue to work collaboratively with Southampton City CCG on workforce planning for primary care in the area. Four

practices have signed up to be part of NHS England's international GP recruitment programme. The CCG is supporting primary care networks with the recruitment and deployment of additional roles, such as pharmacists and social prescribers. All GP practices in Southampton are rated 'good' by the Care Quality Commission.

The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, made a clear commitment to the future of general practice, with primary and community care set to receive at least £4.5 billion more a year by 2023/24, in real terms. This was followed by the five-year GP contract framework, which will provide greater financial security and certainty for practices to plan ahead. This will see billions of extra pounds of investment for improved access, expanded services at local practices, the development of PCNs and longer appointments for patients who need them.

NHS England and Health Education England (HEE) are working together with the profession to increase the GP workforce in England. The forthcoming People Plan will set out a broader strategy for a sustainable general practice workforce. Alongside our commitment to grow the GP workforce, the GP contract will see funding towards up to 20,000 extra non-GP staff working in PCNs by 2023/24.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine

Mr Virendra Sharma: [R] [\[1648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what commitments he plans to make to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services in the UK as part of the UK's representations at the 2019 Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to the provision of comprehensive open access sexual health services, including sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment and access to the full range of contraception methods free from prescription charge. Good progress has been made in a number of areas, but challenges remain. As set out in the Green Paper, 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s', the Government is currently considering calls from the Health and Social Care Committee and others to develop a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for England. The green paper sought comments on priority areas for any new strategy. A full response to the select committee report will be published very shortly.

■ Health Services: Disability

Norman Lamb: [[1607](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the risks posed to people living with disabilities by a lack of availability of (a) medicines and (b) essential medical equipment in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

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, has analysed the supply chains of over 12,000 licensed medicines used by patients in the United Kingdom and close to half a million product lines of medical devices and clinical consumables with an EU/European Economic Area touchpoint. This approach means that the medicines and medical equipment used by people living with disabilities are included within our planning.

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

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

Health Services: Foreign Nationals**Vicky Foxcroft:****[308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Duty of Care?: The impact on midwives of NHS charging for maternity care, published on 9 September 2019, what plans he has to review the functioning of the NHS overseas visitors charging regime as a result of the findings and conclusions of that report; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Department is committed to continually consider evidence it receives in relation to the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors Regulations) 2015 but has no plans to formally review the functioning of the NHS overseas visitors charging regime.

The Department works closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement to support NHS providers in the delivery of the charging regime; and to ensure that providers understand the guidance and how it should be properly and consistently implemented.

This includes ensuring NHS trusts fully understand that all maternity treatment must be provided to any chargeable woman, regardless of her ability to pay, and that they must not be discouraged from receiving it.

Kate Green:**[R] [598]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) findings, (b) conclusions and (c) recommendations of the

report entitled, Duty of care: midwives' experience of the NHS charging regime, published on 9 September 2019 by Maternity Action; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Department has no plans to suspend The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations in relation to charges for maternity care, as recommended in the report 'Duty of care?: The impact on midwives on NHS charging for maternity care.'

The Department is committed to considering evidence it receives in relation to the Regulations, including evidence set out in the report. The Department also works closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement to support NHS providers in the delivery of the charging regime; and to ensure that providers understand the guidance and how it should be properly and consistently implemented. This includes ensuring NHS Trusts fully understand that all maternity treatment must be provided to any chargeable woman, regardless of her ability to pay, and that they must not be discouraged from receiving it.

■ **Health: Older People**

Stephen Metcalfe:

[\[217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to meet the Government's ageing society target of five extra healthier, more independent years of life as identified in the Industrial Strategy.

Caroline Dinage:

Delivering the Government's Ageing Society Grand Challenge will require complex systems thinking across a number of areas including housing, financial support, workforce as well as health and care. We are working with a range of partners across Government, industry, academia and the voluntary sector and we are taking steps in number of areas. These include building United Kingdom business awareness of the longevity economy and age-diverse workforce; supporting local places through Local Industrial Strategies to address the opportunities and challenges of an ageing society; and building research and innovation collaborations with international partners.

Stephen Metcalfe:

[\[218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to incorporate research and evidence into healthy nutrition and physical activity into the Government's ageing society target of five healthier, more independent years of life as identified in the Industrial Strategy.

Caroline Dinage:

The Department's consultation document 'Advancing our Health: Prevention in the 2020s', was published in July 2019. It sets out proposals to support the achievement of the Ageing Society Grand Challenge Mission for everyone to enjoy five extra years of healthy, independent living by 2035 whilst narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest.

'Advancing our Health' included the third chapter of the childhood obesity plan which sets out further measures to help meet our ambition to halve childhood obesity by 2030 and significantly reduce the gap in obesity between children from the most and least deprived areas by 2030. All chapters of the plan were informed by the latest research and emerging evidence, including from debates in Parliament and various reports from key stakeholders. We have also captured analysis from the National Institute for Health Research Obesity Policy Research Unit, which was established as part of the initial plan, through £5 million investment over five years.

Government nutrition advice is underpinned by the best available scientific evidence, which is regularly reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee for Nutrition. In the United Kingdom the Eatwell Guide represents current government recommendations on a healthy, balanced diet to promote long term health at a population level. The Eatwell Guide applies to most people over the age of five and is available to view at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/528193/Eatwell_guide_colour.pdf

The UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines published in September 2019 reflect the most up to date review of evidence for muscle and balance health. These guidelines provide recommendations and targets for different age groups and for people with disability.

'Advancing our Health: Prevention in the 2020s' is available at the following link:

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

■ Heart Diseases: Health Services

Jonathan Ashworth:

[1674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to reduce waiting times for the treatment of chronic heart disease.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service has set a standard maximum wait of six weeks from referral to out-patient investigations such as echocardiograms.

The NHS Long Term Plan will ensure that an additional 54,000 people with heart failure or valvular heart disease will be detected and diagnosed. It will also ensure optimisation of management and treatment of patients admitted to hospital.

In addition, the Getting It Right First Time cardiothoracic surgery report has identified activity and financial opportunities to reduce waiting times for urgent coronary artery bypass grafting.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Neil Coyle: [\[1689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that London councils are adequately resourced to deliver the additional 40 per cent of places allocated to them in January 2019 for the PrEP Impact Trial.

Jo Churchill:

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is currently provided in England through the three year PrEP Impact Trial. Participation in the trial is on a voluntary basis and it is for clinics and local authorities to decide the number of allocated places they can accept.

Peter Kyle: [\[1755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost per person of participation in the PrEP impact trial.

Peter Kyle: [\[1756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is consulting (a) sexual health groups and (b) HIV community groups on the routine commissioning of PrEP.

Jo Churchill:

Information on the cost per person of participation in the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) impact trial is not held by the Department.

The Department is continuing to work closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Public Health England and local authorities to plan for a seamless transition from the PrEP Impact Trial to routine commissioning. We will consult with sexual health groups and HIV community groups as part of this process.

■ Hospitals: Construction

Sir Greg Knight: [\[459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that hospitals are used to near capacity before new hospitals are built; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

In planning strategic change within a health economy, including the development of new capacity, commissioners are expected to look at current available capacity, projected need, the condition and adaptability of existing estates and safe and efficient levels of usage including bed occupancy. These are complex matters with many variables and are planned at local with appropriate public consultation.

All organisations are expected to develop business cases to inform their investment decisions that follows HM Treasury's best practice guidance to develop their cases. NHS England and NHS Improvement provides guidance on the capital regime for National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts, including the principles and

processes for capital investment and property transactions. This guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/capital-regime-investment-and-property-business-case-approval-guidance-nhs-trusts-and-foundation-trusts/>

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Jonathan Ashworth:

[1675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have waited longer than 52 weeks from GP referral to treatment in the latest period for which figures are available.

Edward Argar:

The number of patients waiting over 52 weeks for treatment in August 2019 was 1,233. This figure includes all incomplete referral pathways regardless of the source of referral.

NHS England publishes Referral-to-Treatment performance data on a monthly basis, including the numbers of patients waiting over 52 weeks for treatment following referral.

This is available via the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/rtt-data-2019-20/>

■ Hyperactivity: Mental Health Services

Jo Platt:

[351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS England's News release, NHS taskforce to drive improvements in young people's hospital mental health, learning disability and autism care, published on 10 October 2019, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the proposals in that announcement on people with ADHD.

Caroline Dinéage:

The main focus of the Quality Task Force will be on driving improvements in in-patient care for children and young people with both mental health and the range of neuro-developmental disorders, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This recognises that some of the children and young people who require an in-patient admission may have ADHD.

■ Incontinence: Medical Equipment

Chris Green:

[237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy for NHS England to require (a) Clinical Commissioning Groups and (b) NHS trusts that have formularies which do not list all of the medical devices available on Part IX of the Drug

Tariff to issue guidance to clinicians on their ability to prescribe the most appropriate medical device available through that tariff and to include a link to that tariff online.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has no plans to change current policies. Decisions about the provision of medical devices available on Part IX of the Drug Tariff are a matter for local clinical commissioning groups and National Health Service trusts, taking account of the needs of their local populations.

■ **Influenza: Vaccination**

Chris Green:

[241]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the uptake of the flu vaccine among people with (a) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, (b) asthma and (c) other long-term health conditions.

Jo Churchill:

Those most at risk from flu, including people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and other long term health conditions, are offered annual flu vaccination. At risk patients are targeted by the Public Health England and the NHS England and NHS Improvement marketing campaign, 'Help Us Help You', which includes television, radio and social advertising supported by public relations, digital search and partnership activity. Communications this year include messages about the wider range of flu vaccines now available, which offer better protection.

Those eligible for flu vaccination can get the vaccine from their general practitioner or in a scheme introduced in 2015/16, through local pharmacies, thus widening patient access.

We will be also be publishing a vaccination strategy focused on improving vaccine uptake rates across the life course.

As part of its assurance process NHS England and NHS Improvement work through their regional teams and with clinical commissioning groups to ensure that those practices with lowest uptake are contacted and action is taken to increase vaccination rates.

■ **Midwives**

Dr David Drew:

[42]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the age profile is of NHS midwives, and how many NHS midwives in each age category are (a) UK nationals and (b) nationals of EU member states other than the UK.

Edward Argar:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics for England. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), but not staff working in primary care, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the number of midwives as at June 2019, the latest available data broken down by age and nationality. The data is headcount because nationality data relates to individuals.

AGE BAND	ALL NATIONALITIES	UNITED KINGDOM	EUROPEAN UNION	EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA	REST OF WORLD	UNKNOWN
All age bands	26,192	23,177	1,344	11	447	1,213
Under 25	1,394	1,327	37	2	2	26
25 to 29	3,569	3,156	324	-	14	75
30 to 34	3,523	3,132	293	2	13	83
35 to 39	3,382	3,030	177	2	39	134
40 to 44	3,097	2,728	156	2	79	132
45 to 49	3,079	2,694	117	1	96	171
50 to 54	3,923	3,473	75	1	86	288
55 to 59	2,886	2,515	83	-	57	231
60 to 64	1,132	956	66	-	45	65
65 and over	207	166	16	1	16	8

■ Midwives: Training

Dr David Drew:

[41]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) student midwives there were, (b) people graduated from pre-registration midwifery training and (c) training places for pre-registration midwifery students were (i) made available and (ii) filled in each of the last three academic years.

Edward Argar:

Data from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in the following table. shows the number of students accepted onto midwifery courses over the last three full academic years.

Midwifery student acceptances

MIDWIFERY

Academic year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of acceptances	2,395	2,600	2,680

Source: UCAS end of cycle data, 2018

The following table shows the number of midwives who graduated in England in 2016-17. Data for 2018-19 is not yet available.

Midwifery graduates

MIDWIFERY

Academic year	2016-17	2017-18
Number of graduates	2,162	2,091

Source: Health Education England (HEE) analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency Student Record

In 2016/17 HEE commissioned 2,605 midwifery places of which 2,602 were filled. Following the removal of the bursary in 2017 midwifery places are no longer directly commissioned by HEE. Places are filled via the normal university application process with the Department making funding available for the provision of their clinical placements while studying.

■ MMR Vaccine: Greater London

Catherine West:

[\[298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the take up of the MMR vaccine in London.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England, NHS Improvement and Public Health England are working with key regional and local stakeholders, for example, Directors of Quality Clinical Commissioning Groups and local authorities, to implement actions from the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) Elimination Strategy to increase take-up of the MMR vaccine in London.

Examples of recent actions include:

- Implementing the catch-up vaccination programme for 10 and 11-year olds through general practices;

- An MMR campaign targeted at 18-25-year olds (including 'pop up' clinics in 16 universities across London in October);
- Notifications from Child Health Information Services to help general practices identify children with due and overdue vaccinations; and
- Initiatives led by local teams to address inequalities in vaccine uptake (e.g. vaccine clinics for the Charedi community in Hackney).

In addition, over the next year, the MMR will be offered in all schools, and there will be increased access to vaccination appointments such as vaccine clinics on Friday evenings.

■ NHS: Complaints

Catherine West:

[300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what processes are in place to ensure complaints about the NHS are investigated.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Patients have the right, set out in the NHS Constitution, to make a complaint about any aspect of National Health Service care, treatment or services and to have that complaint properly investigated, dealt with efficiently and to know the outcome of any complaint investigation.

The NHS complaints procedure, including the process for investigating and responding to a complaint is set out in secondary legislation, primarily the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint can do so either to the service provider or to the commissioner. If they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to investigate.

■ NHS: Drugs

Ruth George:

[326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Explanatory Memorandum to The Human Medicines (Amendment) Regulations 2019, 7.12, whether in the event of a Serious Shortage Protocol being issued for immunosuppressant medicines patients would always be referred back to the prescriber for any decision on their treatment before any therapeutic or generic alternative is supplied.

Jo Churchill:

While Serious Shortage Protocols (SSP) in England have the scope to cover all medicines and appliances that are on a National Health Service prescription in primary care, including immunosuppressant medicines, it is clear that an SSP for therapeutic or generic equivalents will not necessarily be suitable for all medicines and patients. For example, where medicines need to be prescribed by brand for

clinical reasons, which may be the case for certain immunosuppressant medicines. In these cases, patients would always be referred back to the prescriber for any decision about their treatment before any alternative is supplied.

Any protocol would however only be introduced if clinicians with expertise in the relevant area think it is appropriate. So, if an SSP for an immunosuppressant medicine was under consideration, this would be agreed with, for example, transplant specialists or other relevant clinicians. Pharmacists will have to use their professional judgment as to whether supplying against the protocol rather than the prescription is appropriate or the patient should be referred to their prescriber.

■ NHS: Staff

Andrew Selous: [460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure safe and adequate levels of staffing across the NHS to protect patient safety.

Andrew Selous: [461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage and support people to enter the nursing profession.

Andrew Selous: [462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase the number of medical school places to meet growing demand.

Edward Argar:

Appropriate staffing levels are an important element of the Care Quality Commission's registration regime. It is the responsibility of individual National Health Service health and care employers to have staffing arrangements in place that deliver safe and effective care. This includes recruiting the staff needed to support these levels and meet local needs.

As part of the NHS People Plan, NHS Improvement and Health Education England are considering how best to support the NHS in ensuring it has access to the staff it needs across England. This has focused on areas such as retaining nurses already employed; supporting their existing nursing workforce in areas such as flexible working; investing in nursing staff's Continuous Professional Development; and increasing undergraduate supply through attracting more students to study nursing.

NHS England and NHS Improvement working with Health Education England are also delivering a major communication campaign 'We are the NHS'. The campaign aims to reduce vacancy rates across the NHS, with a focus on the nursing profession. There has been a strong focus on recruitment to courses starting in September 2019. From September 2019, a further campaign has been launched to encourage the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applications to the 15 January deadline for nursing courses starting in September 2020.

UCAS reported that applicants to study nursing have increased by 4% compared to the same period last year.

Our ongoing 25% expansion of medical school places in England will see 7,500 new doctors available annually by 2020/21. This expansion has delivered five brand new medical schools in Sunderland, Lancashire, Chelmsford, Lincoln and Canterbury. The upcoming NHS People Plan will examine options for growing the medical workforce further. This includes the possibility of further medical school expansion, as well as increasing part-time study and expanding the number of accelerated degree programmes.

■ Nurses: Recruitment

Eleanor Smith: [708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) encourage and (b) support people to enter the nursing profession.

Eleanor Smith: [709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adequate levels of staffing are maintained throughout the NHS to protect patient safety.

Eleanor Smith: [710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to attract more people to work in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

Appropriate staffing levels are an important element of the Care Quality Commission's registration regime. It is the responsibility of individual National Health Service health and care employers to have staffing arrangements in place that deliver safe and effective care. This includes recruiting the staff needed to support these levels and meet local needs.

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encourage UCAS applications to the January 15 deadline for nursing courses starting in September 2020.

The NHS Ambassadors scheme encourages people working and/or studying in healthcare to volunteer one hour per year to speak in schools about their roles or participate in careers events and activities.

Through the interim People Plan, during 2019/20 we will focus on increasing applications to undergraduate AHP education, particularly in the shortage professions of therapeutic radiography, podiatry, orthoptics and prosthetics/orthotics, and developing Allied Health Professionals faculties to work with healthcare providers to identify how to expand clinical placement activity.

Our ongoing 25% expansion of medical school places in England will see an additional 1,500 new medical school places for United Kingdom domestic students. The extra places have been distributed in geographic areas where there have been fewer training places per unit population.

■ **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Counselling**

Chris Ruane:

[1590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to (a) monitor and (b) maintain standards of obsessive compulsive disorder counselling provided by (i) the NHS and (ii) the private healthcare sector.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Most National Health Service funded counselling services for obsessive compulsive disorder are commissioned by clinical commissioning groups and delivered through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme through a variety of providers.

The Department along with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) are conducting a review of regulated activities and will be considering the regulation of psychological therapy services as part of this review. Psychological therapies services are not currently inspected unless they are provided within secondary mental health services and meet CQC criteria. We are looking to consult any proposals from this review in 2020.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published a clinical guideline on the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder and body dysmorphic disorder (CG31) in November 2005. Clinical commissioning groups and providers of healthcare are expected to have regard to this national guidance and are responsible for developing their own local approaches to its implementation taking into account local priorities and needs.

■ Out of Area Treatment: Wales**Jane Dodds:** [\[1793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 17 October 2019 to Questions 271 and 282 on Out of Area Treatment: Wales, in what format information is held at hospitals near the border with Wales on Welsh patients receiving medical treatment at those hospitals.

Edward Argar:

Information on the numbers of patients from Welsh postcode areas treated in England hospitals is collected at trust level, not at individual site level. Data are also not a count of patients as a patient admitted to or attending hospital on more than one occasion would be counted as separate events.

A count of finished admission episodes (FAEs) and accident and emergencies (A&E) attendances for Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RJR), Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (RXW), Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (RTE) and Wye Valley NHS Trust (RLQ) for patients resident in Wales for the years between 2014-15 and 2018-19 is shown in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. PQ1793 table [pq1793 tables.docx]

■ Social Services**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a Green Paper on social care.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Government will bring forward proposals to reform adult social care to give everyone the dignity and security they deserve.

We will set out our proposals in due course.

■ Vaccination: Older People**Chris Green:** [\[242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the uptake of vaccines among older people.

Chris Green: [\[243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to introduce a consistent approach to vaccinations, such as introducing call and re-call systems for shingles, as is already common in flu and pneumococcal vaccination programmes.

Jo Churchill:

Immunisations play a critical role in preventative healthcare and in promoting health and well-being across the life course, particularly in older adults when protection against flu, pneumococcal and shingles is so important. NHS England is working

closely with the Department and with Public Health England to develop a 10-year vaccination strategy and in leading the review of vaccination and immunisation in general practice with both pieces of work focused on improving immunisation uptake rates across the life course.

The review of general practitioner (GP) vaccination and immunisation standards, funding and procurement, commenced in April 2019. One of the purposes of the review is to clarify what is expected of call/recall for all section 7A immunisations. Recommendations from the Review will be implemented through the GP contract where appropriate.

Whilst being assured that providers have ordered sufficient amount of vaccine for their registered populations, work has also been undertaken collaboratively with the Department, Public Health England and flu vaccine manufacturers to ensure equity of supply and distribution of adult flu vaccines to all providers across England. This will ensure that all those eligible, including elderly and housebound patients, are immunised as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

Those most 'at risk' from flu, including people aged 65 and over, pregnant women and those in clinical risk groups, are offered an annual flu vaccination. At-risk patients are targeted by the Public Health England and NHS England marketing campaign, 'Help Us Help You', which includes television, radio and social advertising, supported by public relations, digital search and partnership activity.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Employment

Catherine West: [\[301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress the Government has made on its review of the restrictions on asylum seekers' rights to work.

Victoria Atkins:

We fully recognise that this is an important and complex issue and as the Prime Minister has said, the Home Office is currently reviewing the matter. That work is ongoing and Parliament will be updated accordingly.

■ Criminal Investigation: Video Recordings

Nic Dakin: [\[142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of video recording all investigation stages not being standard practice on (a) charge and (b) conviction rates.

Kit Malthouse:

Codes E and F of the Policing and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 governs the conduct video and audio recording of interviews of non-terrorism suspects, including appropriate safeguards. All interviews of terrorist suspects in England and Wales

must be audio and visual recorded. The use of video recording for other stages of the investigatory process is an operational matter for the police. Research has not been conducted on the impact of broader recording practices.

The College of Policing published research on the impact of body worn video on outcomes.

https://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/BWV_Report.pdf This found that a significantly higher proportion of incidents attended by officers wearing a camera resulted in a charge rather than other criminal justice out-comes (e.g. cautions).

■ Extradition: USA

Nic Dakin: [\[151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) US citizens have been extradited to the UK for crimes committed in the US and (b) UK citizens have been extradited to the US for crimes committed in the UK since the implementation of the Extradition Act 2003.

Brandon Lewis:

Data relating to the location of alleged criminality in extradition requests is not recorded centrally and as such this information cannot be provided.

■ Home Office: Equal Pay

Chris Stephens: [\[1729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many equal pay reviews there have been in her Department since 2010; what the dates were of those reviews; and whether her Department plans to undertake an equal pay review in 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office conducts a Policy Equality Statement (PES) annually, following the annual pay award process. The process is usually finalised in the Autumn further to negotiations with Trade Unions. A Policy Equality Statement (PES) will be undertaken following the implementation of the Pay Award this year.

Additionally, since 2017 the Home Office has annually published its gender pay gap on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-gender-pay-gap-report-and-data-2017/home-offices-gender-pay-gap-report-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-gender-pay-gap-report-and-data-2018/home-offices-gender-pay-gap-report-2018>

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**Members: Twitter**

Ian Austin: [\[1631\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many hon. Members have discussed with the House authorities abuse and threats that they have received on Twitter.

Tom Brake:

Threats and abuse received by Members should always be reported to the police.

The Parliamentary Security Department uses best endeavours to review tweets sent publicly to Members, reporting matters of concern to the police and Twitter as appropriate. This opt-in service is only done with Members' express permission.

The Parliamentary Security Department regularly provides advice to Members and their staff on social media security, but we do not collate data on these interactions. For security and privacy reasons, the discussions held between Members and the House authorities relating to threats and abuse are not publicly available.

The Member is invited to contact the Director of Security for Parliament directly if he wishes to discuss this matter further.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**Affordable Housing**

Sir Gary Streeter: [\[R\]](#) [\[25\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his Department's definition of subsidy is as used in Annex 2A of the definition of affordable housing in the National Planning Framework.

Esther McVey:

The National Planning Policy Framework provides a definition of affordable housing for planning purposes. Within that, section a) provides a definition of affordable housing for rent. This includes a provision that homes remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

The reference to subsidy within this section usually relates to where government has provided capital grant, in particular grant funding provided through the Affordable Homes Programme.

John Healey: [\[886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions (a) he and (b) his officials have had with (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in HM Treasury on the future of the Affordable Homes Programme, ahead of the Budget on 6 November 2019.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: The government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing. The current £9 billion Affordable Homes Programme will continue to March 2022, delivering approximately 250,000 affordable homes in a range of tenures. The Department has worked closely with HM Treasury to ensure that longer term funding is available for affordable homes. In September 2018 we announced an additional £2 billion of long-term funding certainty for housing associations. This extra funding will deliver more affordable homes and stimulate the sector's wider building ambitions, through strategic partnerships.

MHCLG officials regularly meet with HM Treasury officials to discuss matters related to the supply of affordable housing. Decisions about additional investment beyond the current Affordable Homes Programme will be announced at a future fiscal event.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Sarah Jones:**[\[1102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Answer of 11 February 2019 to Question 217590 on Buildings: Insulation, if he will publish the (a) results of the bespoke testing programme or (b) date when the results will be published.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: I refer the Hon Member to the response I gave to Question UIN 290851 on 8 October 2019.

Sarah Jones:[\[1104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to extend the ban on combustible materials on tower blocks to (a) hospitals, (b) care homes, (c) sheltered housing and (d) other high-risk buildings.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN 291436 on 26 September 2019.

For ease of reference my earlier response read: On 29 November 2018, the Government introduced a ban of combustible materials in the external wall of buildings including blocks of flats, student accommodation and care homes more than 18 metres in height. The ban requires that all materials which become part of an external wall or specified attachment achieve European Class A2-s1, d0 or Class A1, other than those covered by exemptions.

As stated in the explanatory memorandum the Department intends to review the ban annually through monitoring arrangements and advice from bodies such as Building Regulations Advisory Committee for England. This will include considering the scope of the ban.

Sarah Jones:

[\[1105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many buildings have received funding from the Government's £200 million private sector ACM cladding remediation fund.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: To date no buildings have received funding. However, by 18 October, 55 owners or responsible persons for buildings have started the application process. We expect first applications to be approved in October. Homes England and the Greater London Authority are our delivery partners for the fund and are working with eligible building owners to ensure remediation is completed.

There is no excuse for building owners to delay remediation. Eligible building owners should have entered the fund application process by the end of October at the latest. We have established a Joint Inspection Team to support local authorities in taking enforcement action where building owners are refusing to remediate high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding.

■ Community Assets: Ownership

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to page 14 of the Government's Civil Society Strategy, what progress his Department has made towards improving guidance to help communities take ownership of local assets.

Jake Berry:

My Department continues to engage with partners on how best to ensure community groups have access to the necessary advice and support to take assets into community ownership. We have funded the development of the online platform "My Community" to provide detailed advice and guidance to voluntary and community groups interested in taking assets into community ownership and encourage the take up of Community Rights. The Department has also supported the work of the online platform "Keep It In The Community" to ensure that more community groups are able to identify local assets of community value.

In addition, organisations such as Sport England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Power to Change provide comprehensive and specialist bespoke advice, ensuring community groups have access to the knowledge and networks which encourage the community ownership of assets.

■ Fracking

Chi Onwurah:

[\[260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for the publication of the Government response to its consultation on Permitted development for shale gas exploration.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 17 October 2019]: The government is considering the responses to the consultation and will publish its response in due course.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation**Sarah Jones:**[\[1106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost of remediation of social sector tower blocks with high-pressure laminate cladding and insulation combinations found to be unsafe by the independent expert advisory panel on building safety.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: No estimate has been made, but my Department has asked local authorities and housing associations to provide data on the external walls systems of their high-rise residential buildings of 18 metres or above. This exercise is part of an ongoing programme to build a more complete picture of the variety of external wall systems in use. I have provided £4 million to support local authorities with this important exercise. I expect this to be complete by 31 March 2020.

■ Tenant Fees Act 2019**Dr Sarah Wollaston:**[\[1016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on pet owners of the implementation of the Tenant Fees Act 2019.

Esther McVey:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: The government has not made a specific assessment of the effect on pet owners of the implementation of the Tenant Fees Act 2019.

■ Urban Areas: North East**Grahame Morris:**[\[986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will (a) make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the Cambridge University Bennett Institute for Public Policy report entitled Townscapes: The North East and (b) reintroduce the position of Minister for the North East to tackle the decline in North East towns referred to in that report.

Jake Berry:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: a) This government is committed to levelling up the regions, so that people can benefit in our shared prosperity. On 6 September we announced the 100 places we have invited to develop proposals for Town Deals as part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund announced on 27 July. 45 of these places are in the Northern Powerhouse, 18 of which are in the North East. Newcastle, North

Tyneside and Northumberland will also benefit from £600 million of investment in jobs and infrastructure under the North of Tyne Devolution Deal, whilst the Tees Valley Devolution Deal is worth £450 million. Additionally, of the £3.4 billion of Local Growth Funding that has gone to the Northern Powerhouse, £505.6 million has been allocated to the North East and Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnerships. b) The position of Minister for the Northern Powerhouse was first created in 2015 to drive economic growth in the North and ensure the needs of the North of England are represented in government. I was appointed Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth in June 2017 and I was re-appointed on 25 July 2019 as Minister of State attending Cabinet, showing that the Northern Powerhouse remains at the heart of this government's agenda.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Developing Countries: Female Genital Mutilation

John Mann:

[469]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what effect UK overseas development assistance has had on levels of female genital mutilation over the last 10 years.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Today a girl is about one-third less likely to be cut than 30 years ago, but UNICEF estimates that at least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The UK leads the world in our support to the Africa-led movement to end FGM. Since 2013, our programmes have enabled 8,000 communities, representing 24 million people, to pledge to abandon FGM, and over 3 million girls to receive FGM protection and care services.

We know, however, that more needs to be done and in 2018 we announced a further £50 million UK aid package – the biggest single investment worldwide to date by any international donor – to tackle this issue across the most-affected countries in Africa.

■ Developing Countries: Females

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[R] [1647]

To ask the secretary of state for international development, if he will discuss the importance of advancing adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights at the 2019 Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK will raise the importance of adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights as part of our engagements at the Nairobi ICPD+25 Summit. The UK committed at the 2017 Family Planning Summit to focus on adolescents in our sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes. We continue to amplify the needs of adolescent girls through our voice on the world stage.

At the UN General Assembly, the Secretary of State made clear the UK's ongoing commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights, announcing an additional £600 million aid package to provide improved access to family planning. UK aid programmes are helping to give millions of women and girls control over their bodies, so they can choose if, when and how many children they want; that is a basic right that every woman and girl deserves.

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department is taking to increase women's rights in developing countries.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK is an international leader on gender equality and promoting women's and girls' rights. Gender equality is a top development priority and priority for the UK. We will not achieve any of the Sustainable Development Goals while gender inequality persists. Gender equality is considered in the design of all of DFID's programmes. Our support is delivering results at scale – between 2015 and 2019, UKAid supported 5.8 million girls to gain a decent education; helped 23.5 million women and girls with modern methods of family planning; and reached 60.3 million children under 5, women of childbearing age and adolescent girls through our nutrition-related programmes.

■ Developing Countries: Genito-urinary Medicine

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[R\] \[1649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment he has made of the contribution of the private sector to delivering sexual and reproductive health programmes in developing countries.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[R\] \[1650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the private sector in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights outcomes in developing countries.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK government considers the private sector, both for-profit and not-for-profit, to be critical to the successful delivery of sexual and reproductive health programmes and outcomes in developing countries.

DFID works with private manufacturers to develop new products such as contraceptives and HIV treatment, and to reduce their prices so that they are accessible. For example, a global partnership between donors and manufacturers led to a decrease in price of contraceptive implants globally from \$20 per unit to \$8, leading to increased access and uptake. DFID also funds not-for-profit providers to implement reproductive health programmes in many countries; and supports national governments to work with private health care providers as part of their overall health system. We support global programmes that attract the private sector's contribution,

such as the Global Financing Facility, and we also recognise that global companies can have an impact through their employment practices and work with them to improve sexual and reproductive health for female employees.

■ **Developing Countries: Primary Education**

John Mann: [\[472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what effect UK overseas development assistance has had on the take up of primary education over the last 10 years.

Andrew Stephenson:

The UK is a leader in global education. Between 2000 and 2018, the global number of children out of primary school dropped from 100 million to 59 million. The biggest proportion of bilateral UK Aid education spend (35%) is for basic education and between 2015 and 2019 UK Aid supported 14.3 million children to gain a decent education, including at least 5.8 million girls.

■ **International Conference on Population and Development: UK Delegations**

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[R\]](#) [\[1645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which (a) Ministers and (b) officials will attend as delegates the 2019 Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[R\]](#) [\[1646\]](#)

To ask the secretary of state for international development, what his priorities are for the 2019 Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Nairobi Summit is a critical global moment for sexual and reproductive health and rights in 2019 as it marks 25 years since the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, and 50 years since the formation of United Nations Population Fund.

The UK Government are planning for high level attendance at this important conference. We will take every opportunity to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls and women and are working with partners to play our part in ensuring a successful Summit.

■ **Sub-Saharan Africa: AIDS**

Ruth Jones: [\[719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions his Department has had representatives of African Union on tackling child deaths from Aids in sub-Saharan Southern Africa.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK remains a world leader in efforts to end new HIV infections and preventable AIDS-related deaths including through our major investment in the Global Fund which in 2018 helped protect over 700,000 babies from being infected by their mothers. We are now stepping up on efforts to end preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children in the developing world by 2030.

We work closely with many international partners including the African Union on UK priorities including HIV. For example, through our seat on the Executive Board of Unitaid, we discuss ways to tackle child deaths from AIDS, with a representative of African countries designated by the African Union.

■ UK-Africa Investment Summit

Ruth Jones: [\[715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether President Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe has been invited to the UK-Africa Investment Summit scheduled to take place in January 2020.

Ruth Jones: [\[717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate he has made of the cost of the UK-Africa Investment Summit scheduled for January 2020.

Ruth Jones: [\[720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether President Biya of Cameroon has been invited to the UK-Africa Investment Summit scheduled for January 2020.

Ruth Jones: [\[721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea has been invited to the UK-Africa Investment Summit scheduled for January 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

In January, the Government will host the UK-Africa Investment Summit. The summit will bring together African governments; UK and African businesses; and major international organisations. Formal invitations will be issued shortly from the Prime Minister to invited Heads of State.

The cost of the event is in line with events of a similar size and ambition recently delivered by HMG. We will ensure it delivers value for money and provides positive benefits for both African countries and for the UK.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Exports: Environment Protection**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[1764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what environmental assessment UK Export Finance makes before agreements are made.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[1766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment UK Export Finance makes of in-country employment practices of the companies that accept loans from that organisation.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is committed to high standards of environmental, social and human rights (ESHR) risk management. It rigorously follows the requirements of the OECD Common Approaches and Equator Principles, which set the framework for export credit agencies and international financial institutions in managing such risks. It has a specialist ESHR team that reviews relevant projects prior to UKEF taking a decision. Supported projects are then monitored by the ESHR team throughout the lifetime of UKEF's support to ensure compliance with these requirements.

■ Fossil Fuels: Exports

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[1765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will take steps to end UK Export Finance's funding of fossil fuel industries.

Graham Stuart:

Investment in fossil fuels will continue to be required as we tackle climate change and transition away from high greenhouse gas emitting energy sources. UK Export Finance ensures that no viable UK export fails for lack of finance.

■ Small Businesses: Exports

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[1763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of investments made by the UK Export Finance are provided to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Graham Stuart:

13% of the value of the support provided by UK Export Finance for UK exports in the 2018/19 financial year was provided to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 79% of the businesses UKEF supported in this financial year were SMEs.

■ Whisky: USA

Brendan O'Hara: [\[193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what telephone discussions her Department had with representatives of the US administration between 2 and 7 October 2019 on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what email correspondence her Department had between 2 and 7 October 2019 with representatives of the US administration on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what face-to-face meetings she, her Ministers or officials of her Department had between 2 and 7 October 2019 with representatives of the US administration on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what face-to-face discussions she, her ministers or officials of her Department had with representatives of the US administration between 7 and 14 October 2019 on the imposition of US tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department had by telephone with representatives of the US administration between 7 and 14 October 2019 on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what email correspondence her Department had with representatives of the US administration between 7 and 14 October 2019 on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Conor Burns:

As a priority, we are continuing to engage with the US at all levels to protect and promote UK industry. Specifically, we are working closely with the US to make the case that tariffs are not in the interest of the UK, EU or US. My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has recently spoken to US Trade Representative Lighthizer. My Rt Hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has raised this urgent matter with US Secretary of State Pompeo and the Prime Minister urged President Trump directly to reconsider the announced tariffs. I have also personally had a call with US Ambassador Johnson on this issue. We will continue to work with the UK, EU and US and support the case for de-escalation and a negotiated settlement.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department had by telephone between 2 and 7 October 2019 with representatives of the EU on the imposition of US tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what email correspondence her Department had with representatives of the EU between 2 and 7 October 2019 on the imposition of US tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what face-to-face meetings she, her Ministers or officials of her Department had with representatives of the EU between 2 and 7 October 2019 on the imposition of US tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what telephone discussions her Department had with representatives of the EU between 7 and 14 October 2019 on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what email correspondence her Department had with representatives of the EU between 7 and 14 October on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what face-to-face meetings she, her Ministers or officials of her Department had with representatives of the EU between 7 and 14 October 2019 on the imposition of tariffs on malt Scotch whisky.

Conor Burns:

We are working with the European Commission to continue to support a negotiated settlement to the Airbus dispute. We are continuing to engage and influence EU decision-making on these matters. We are also working with the EU to seek confirmation from the WTO of our compliance and that the UK and the EU should therefore not be subject to tariffs. We have also had extensive engagement with the US administration on the issue of tariffs.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to support Scotland's small single malt whisky distillers in the event of the imposition of US tariffs.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on ensuring that the Scotch whisky industry is supported

by measures in the next Budget in the event that a 25 per cent tariff on malt Scotch whisky entering the USA takes effect on 18 October 2019.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the Government's strategy is on ensuring that a 25 per cent tariff on Scotch whisky entering the USA does not take effect on 18 October 2019.

Conor Burns:

We are clear that the best outcome to this dispute is to seek a negotiated settlement in partnership with the EU and the US that would prevent these tariffs coming into force. This has been raised by the Prime Minister in a call with President Trump and by my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade with US Trade Representative Lighthizer. I have also personally had a call with US Ambassador Johnson on this issue. We will continue to work closely with the EU and the US on a settlement and to seek confirmation from the WTO of our compliance and that the UK and the EU should therefore not be subject to tariffs.

JUSTICE

■ Cardiff Prison and Parc Prison: Self-harm

Mrs Madeleine Moon:

[\[109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department's statistics identify (a) individual episodes of self-harm and (b) episodes of self-harm by an individual in (i) HMP Parc and (ii) HMP Cardiff prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

This question has been interpreted as the number of self-harm incidents and the number of individuals who self-harm. The data shows the number of self-harm incidents and individuals in HMPs Cardiff and Parc in each of the three financial years (the PQ didn't specify a time period, so have used the latest three years).

CARDIFF PRISON

	2016-17	2017-2018
		18 -19
Self-Harm Incidents	202	273 527
Self-Harm Individuals	88	145 175

Parc Prison

	2016-17	2017-2018
		18 -19
Self-Harm Incidents	1477	1604 1436

CARDIFF PRISON

Self-Harm Individuals 346 331 271

Our most recent Safety in Custody statistics show that levels of self-harm in Welsh prisons are comparable with the national picture. These figures are published online every quarter, and are broken down by individual prisons to measure trends in specific areas, as well as across the whole of England and Wales. There is a piece of work underway in Wales to identify the drivers of self-harm, regionally and at establishment level. Similar work is being done at a national level looking across all prisons.

Too many people self-harm in prisons and we are taking action to stop it. We are investing £100 million in security measures to tackle the drugs, weapons and mobile phones that fuel violence and self-harm behind bars – this is on top of the £70 million we have already spent improving safety and conditions. We have recruited more than 4,300 new prison officers and introduced the keyworker model - so every inmate can have a dedicated officer for support.

We've also given the Samaritans £1.5 million over three years, trained more than 24,000 staff in mental health awareness, and improved support for anyone at risk of suicide or self-harm.

■ **Homicide: Sentencing**

Mr Philip Hollobone: [\[941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of sentence served by people convicted of murder was in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

The information you ask for is routinely published and therefore available in the public domain, however, I have provided it below for ease of reference. The table shows the average time served by individuals sentenced to mandatory life, the only sentence available to the Courts for those convicted of murder, who were released from custody in each of the last five years.

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
17	16	16	17	17

As with any large-scale recording system, administrative IT systems are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Public protection is our priority. It is for the independent Parole Board to review the detention of those prisoners serving mandatory life sentences who have completed their tariff period. The Board will direct the release of these prisoners only if it is satisfied that the levels of risk posed to the general public are reduced enough that

the National Probation Service and its partner agencies can safely manage them in the community under supervision.

■ Judges: Training

Nic Dakin: [\[522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing mandatory training on memory science for judges; and whether he will introduce mandatory training on memory science for judges.

Chris Philp:

Responsibility for judicial training rests with the Lord Chief Justice and with the Senior President of Tribunals (for the tribunals judiciary, under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, in line with the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007) and is exercised through the Judicial College.

To preserve judicial independence, the judiciary and professional staff in the Judicial College are responsible for the design, content, and delivery of judicial training.

Courts and tribunals across all jurisdictions rely upon individuals accurately recalling things when giving evidence, both oral and written. The cross-jurisdictional induction and continuation seminars that deal with judicial assessment of the reliability and credibility of witnesses, refer to this during presentations and workshops.

■ Life Imprisonment: Prisoners' Release

Philip Davies: [\[952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time served in prison by (a) men and (b) women on mandatory life sentences was for those who were released from prison in each of the last five years.

Philip Davies: [\[953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average time served in prison by (a) men and (b) women sentenced for murder was for those who were released from prison in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

The table shows the average time served by men and women sentenced to mandatory life, the only sentence available to the Courts for those convicted of murder, who were released from custody in each of the last five years.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Men	17	17	17	17	17
Women	11	13	12	14	14

As with any large-scale recording system, administrative IT systems are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Public protection is our priority. It is for the independent Parole Board to review the detention of those prisoners serving mandatory life sentences who have completed their tariff period. The Board will direct the release of these prisoners only if it is satisfied that the levels of risk posed to the general public are reduced enough that the National Probation Service and its partner agencies can safely manage them in the community under supervision.

■ Ministry of Justice: Health

Chris Ruane: [\[916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department uses ONS estimates of personal wellbeing in formulating policy; and what policies his Department has introduced to improve personal well-being in the last 12 months.

Chris Philp:

We use ONS wellbeing statistics to inform Health and Wellbeing policy within the Civil Service. The Ministry of justice also measures personal wellbeing through the annual Civil Service People Survey using the same national statistics that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) use for the UK population as a whole.

The four personal well-being questions are: Life Satisfaction, Worthwhile, Happiness, and Anxiety. Further details can be found [here](#).

The People Survey is one source of data used to inform the department's wellbeing agenda and the development of our wellbeing strategy. More information can be found within the department's published voluntary report on disability mental health and wellbeing.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/827763/moj-voluntary-reporting.pdf

Since the launch of the department's Health and Wellbeing Strategy in November 2015, we have produced a wide range of toolkits and guidance to support personal wellbeing. Most are based on cross government products developed by Civil Service Employee Policy (CSEP). The main polices/guidance we have introduced in the last 12 months are:

- Domestic Abuse – guidance and support for employees and their managers
- cross-government toolkits – supporting staff through menopause
- Support guidance for EU Nationals working in MoJ.
- A wellbeing and resilience toolkit for staff working on EU exit work.

■ Ministry of Justice: Pay

Chris Stephens: [\[1733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the pay system in his Department has been changed to take account of the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruling on Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council v Mr G Willetts and Others on holiday pay and voluntary

overtime; and whether affected workers in his Department have been given back pay as a result of that ruling.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice (HMPPS, HMCTS, CICA, LAA, and OPG) pay system has been updated in response to the tribunal case to meet the requirement for holiday pay and overtime. Affected staff have received arrears backdated to 1 March 2016.

■ **Ministry of Justice: Public Expenditure**

Richard Burgon:

[\[1747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his oral contribution at the Justice Select Committee on 16 October 2019, what the total funding applied for by the Department was in the Spending Round 2019.

Chris Philp:

In our Spending Round 2019 request, the Ministry of Justice sought funding for the department's key priorities. This included funding to prepare for Brexit, to ensure the effective operation of the courts and tribunals system, to deliver a strong probation service, and to support a prisons system which provides decent and safe accommodation, and reduces reoffending.

The Ministry was successful in securing a 4.9% real term increase in our fiscal resource funding for the next financial year, having agreed a settlement of £8.142bn. In addition to our resource budget we also agreed a capital settlement for 2020-21 of £620m.

We have subsequently agreed additional funding for 2020-21 of £156m to further invest in custodial maintenance. Our revised settlement for 2020-21 is £8.198bn fiscal resource and £720m capital. We are now in the process of setting internal budget allocations to ensure this budget delivers our priorities as effectively as possible.

■ **Offenders: Employment**

Bill Wiggin:

[\[66\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support his Department provides to help prisoners secure employment on release.

Lucy Frazer:

Since we launched our Education and Employment Strategy in May 2018, we have overhauled the prison education system, allowing governors to commission skills-based training and education that meets the needs of the local labour market and helps prison leavers into work.

We have introduced the New Futures Network, a specialist part of the Prison Service which brokers partnerships between prisons and employers in England and Wales to provide job opportunities for prisoners both in custody and on release. Additionally, we have established new rules to allow governors to get offenders out to work earlier

on temporary licence. This will increase the opportunities available for prisoners to secure jobs on release and reduce their chances of reoffending.

DWP Prison Work Coaches are in place at many prisons to support prisoners into work on release and our recently published National Partnership Agreement with DWP will further strengthen our collaboration in this area.

■ Prison Officers

Richard Burgon: [1741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many band 3 to 5 prison officers were employed in each male local prison in (a) March 2010 and (b) the latest period for which figures are available.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of prison officers that were employed in male local prisons as at 31 March 2010 to 30 June 2019 is provided in the accompanying excel file.

Attachments:

1. Prison Officers in Male local prisons table [Copy of PQ 1741 prison officers in male local prisons final file.xlsx]

■ Prison Sentences

Philip Davies: [951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of pre-sentence reports have recommended immediate custody for (a) men and (b) women in Crown courts in each of the last three years.

Chris Philp:

The information requested has been provided in the table below. The data shows the number and proportion of recommendations in pre-sentence reports prepared for Crown Courts in 2016 - 2018 where the sentence proposed was Immediate custody.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/951>

■ Prison sentences

Philip Davies: [955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of all determinate custodial sentences handed down to (a) men and (b) women were served in prison.

Chris Philp:

Data on releases from prison is published regularly in the Offender Management Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2018>

Tables A3.2i and ii of *Prison Releases 2018* show that the mean average proportion of the sentence served in prison by males released from determinate sentences in 2018 was 65%, the median proportion was 55%. For females the mean average was 50% and the median was 45%. This data includes both standard determinate sentences, for which the automatic release point is 50% of the sentence, and extended determinate sentences (EDS), for which the earliest point of release is two-thirds of the sentence.

There are two key factors which help to explain the difference in time served in custody. Men tend to be convicted of more serious offences attracting longer custodial sentences. This means that women are more likely to be eligible for early release under the home detention curfew (HDC) scheme, which allows release up to 135 days before the halfway point of the sentence and is limited to offenders sentenced to less than four years who pass a risk assessment. The data in these tables also includes time served following recall to prison from licenced supervision. Recalled men tend to be serving longer sentences (12 months or more) and will generally serve longer after recall than recalled women, who tend to be serving less than 12 months.

■ Prisoners: Pregnancy

Catherine West:

[283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the death of a baby in custody at Bronzefield women's prison, what steps his Department is taking improve the care of pregnant women in custody.

Lucy Frazer:

The recent death of a baby at HMP/YOI Bronzefield is a tragic incident and the mother involved is receiving appropriate support.

There are currently eleven investigations underway, including an overarching investigation to be conducted by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO).

There are already a number of steps in place to ensure that pregnant women get appropriate support. These include:

1. All pregnant women are provided with the local NHS Pregnancy free advice line number.
2. Fortnightly multi-disciplinary Maternity Boards for all pregnant women.
3. Ensuring local mid-midwifery services are fully engaged within the prison.
4. Ensuring appropriate Social Services support, including for those pregnant women who refuse to engage with ante-natal services.

The Prison Group Director for the Women's Estate has asked prisons to ensure that the above measures are in place at each prison.

An additional safeguard has been put in place. That is that welfare observations on pregnant women who are post 28 weeks will take place every hour during the night.

A Prison Service Instruction sets out the current policy on Mother and Baby Units (MBUs), and the Policy Guidance adjoining the Women's Policy Framework 2018 contains comprehensive operational guidance on perinatal support to women in custody.

Before this tragic event took place, a review of the MBU policy was already underway and we are now expediting it.

To accompany the policy, a training course for managing pregnant women in custody and MBUs will continue to be available to prison staff supporting pregnant women, or women with children in MBUs.

■ Prisons

Mrs Madeleine Moon: [108]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which prisons are in the comparator group with HMP Parc; for what reason those prisons were chosen; which of those prisons have (a) young offender institution and (b) sex offender wings; what the (i) category and (ii) size of prison population is of those prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

Comparator groups of prisons for 2018/19 can be found within Annex D of the annual prison performance ratings, published on gov.uk:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820601/annual-prison-performance-ratings-2018-19-guide.pdf

Further information for all establishments including population, operational capacity, and accommodation details, can also be found on gov.uk at the following links:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2019>

■ Prisons: Education

Imran Hussain: [211]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many dynamic purchasing system contracts for education have been entered into by each prison since 1 April 2019.

Imran Hussain: [212]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total value is of dynamic purchasing system contracts for education entered into by each prison since 1 April 2019.

Lucy Frazer:

Information on the number of Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contracts entered into since 1st April 2019 and the total value of DPS contracts entered into since 1st April 2019, by prison, is provided in the attached table.

As set out in the Education and Employment Strategy in May last year, significant changes to the delivery arrangements for prison education took full effect from April 2019. From that point, governors took control of their establishment's education budget, determined the curriculum on offer and how it is structured and organised, and decided who their education providers will be.

Prison governors commission core and bespoke education provision through two new routes: the Prison Education Framework (PEF) and the prison education DPS. The DPS enables governors to commission innovative, specialist or one-off education provision for their establishment.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQs 211 212 - Contract information by Prison April 2019 (002).xlsx]

Imran Hussain: [\[213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total value is of each Prison Education Framework contract entered into since 1 April 2019.

Lucy Frazer:

As set out in the Education and Employment Strategy (May 2018), significant changes to the delivery arrangements for prison education took full effect from April 2019. From that point, governors took control of their establishment's education budget, determined the curriculum on offer and how it is structured and organised, and decided who their education providers will be.

Information on the total value of the contracts in the 17 Lots in the Prison Education Framework (PEF) contract, since 1 April 2019, is provided in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table of contract values [PQ 213 .xlsx]

Imran Hussain: [\[215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the education budget was for each prison in 2018-19.

Lucy Frazer:

Prison education allocations under the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) arrangements in England for each public sector prison for 2018-2019 are provided in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ 215 - 1819 OLASS 4 allocations (002).xlsx]

■ **Prisons: Libraries**

Imran Hussain: [\[214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the annual budget was for library services for each prison in 2018-19.

Lucy Frazer:

Allocations to public sector prisons in England for prison libraries (for the financial year 2018-19) are provided in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ 214 - 1819 Library budget allocations (002).xls]

■ Prisons: Mother and Baby Units**Kate Green:**[\[1021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to delay the start of a custodial sentence for pregnant women and new mothers until a place in a mother and baby unit has been made available to them.

Chris Philp:

Sentencing decisions are for the independent judiciary following relevant sentencing guidelines produced by the Sentencing Council.

In line with the sentencing guideline on the Imposition of Community and Custodial Sentences, the courts may choose to suspend a custodial sentence where there is strong personal mitigation or where immediate custody would result in significant harmful impact upon others. The expanded explanations produced by the Sentencing Council, which came into force on 1 October, provide further guidance on mitigation where an offender is pregnant.

Emergency Admissions Boards can be held to expedite a woman's placement on a mother and baby unit, and there are a range of circumstances when these can be appropriate. Pregnant women receiving custodial sentences are also provided access to a number of supportive provisions reflective of that which is available in the community, including: being provided with the local NHS Pregnancy free advice line number; fortnightly multi-disciplinary Maternity Boards for all pregnant women; local mid-midwifery services; and appropriate Social Services support, including for pregnant women who refuse to engage with ante-natal services.

In recent weeks, an additional safeguard of hourly welfare observations during the night has been put in place by the Director of the Women's Estate, for women who are post 28 weeks pregnant.

■ Prisons: Repairs and Maintenance**Richard Burgon:**[\[1742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many repairs were outstanding in each prison in (a) 2010, (b) 2015 and (c) 2018.

Richard Burgon:[\[1743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the estimated cost of the repairs backlog was in (a) 2010, (b) 2015 and (c) 2018.

Richard Burgon: [1744]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the total cost of outstanding repairs is by prison.

Lucy Frazer:

This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. I refer the Hon Member to PQ 165647 for repairs outstanding in 2010, and PQ 291005 for repair work orders from September 2018 to August 2019

■ Remand in Custody: Children

Imran Hussain: [639]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of children remanded in custody in 2018 (a) received a custodial sentence, (b) were acquitted and (c) were charged with a violent offence.

Wendy Morton

In response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse report, we committed to undertake further work to consider the use of youth custodial remand in greater detail. Within the next year, we aim to identify options to reduce the numbers of children remanded to custody where appropriate, while ensuring victims and the public are protected.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on individuals who were remanded in custody during court proceedings. Information on the age of those prosecuted, the type of crimes and the outcome of prosecution can be found by using the Remands: Magistrates' Court data tool available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/804525/remands-magistrates-court-tool-2018.xlsx

and the Remands: Crown Court data tool available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802317/remands-crown-court-tool-2018.xlsx

Individuals may have different remand status at different courts (e.g. at magistrates' and Crown courts), the status given in these tools relates only to the remand status at that specific court. As a result, court totals should not be combined. With this in mind, the answers to questions a, b and c should be considered independently in each data tool.

Note that we have answered question (c) based on the number of prosecutions as MoJ do not hold data on charges and interpreted 'children' as being juveniles, therefore aged 10-17 years old.

In the Magistrates' Court data tool:

Use the 'Age Group' filter and select juveniles. Use 'the Row Labels' option on row 28 to select '03: Custody'. Use the 'Outcome' filter to de-select '01: FTA', '06: Committed for trial' and '07: Committed for sentence'

To select the number of individuals who (a) received a custodial sentence filter 'outcome' to '08: immediate custody'. This number can be used to calculate the proportion of juveniles remanded in custody who received a custodial sentence at the Magistrates' Court.

To select the number of individuals who (b) were acquitted filter 'outcome' to include '02: Proceeding discontinued', '03: Discharged Sec 6', '04: Withdrawn' and '05: Dismissed'. The total number can be used to calculate the proportion of juveniles remanded in custody who were acquitted at the Magistrates' Court.

To select the number of individuals who (c) were prosecuted for a violent crime, filter 'Offence Group' to select '01: Violence against the person'. The total number can be used to calculate the proportion of juveniles remanded in custody prosecuted for a violent crime at the Magistrates' Court.

In the Crown Court data tool:

Use the 'Age Group' filter and select juveniles. Use 'the Row Labels' option on row 29 to select '03: Custody'. Use the 'Outcome' filter to de-select '01: FTA'.

To select the number of individuals who (a) received a custodial sentence filter 'outcome' to '04: immediate custody'. This number can be used to calculate the proportion of juveniles remanded in custody who received a custodial sentence at the Crown Court.

To select the number of individuals who (b) were acquitted filter 'outcome' to include '02: Not tried Crown Court' and '03: Acquitted Crown Court'. The total number can be used to calculate the proportion of juveniles remanded in custody who were acquitted at the Crown Court.

To select the number of individuals who (c) were prosecuted for a violent crime filter 'Offence Group' to select '01: Violence against the person'. The total number can be used to calculate the proportion of juveniles remanded in custody prosecuted for a violent crime at the Crown Court

Please note: Children classified as remanded in custody may include individuals who were remanded to local authority accommodation rather than youth detention accommodation.

■ Young Offenders: Education

Bill Wiggin:

[65]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on improving educational opportunities for young offenders.

Wendy Morton:

We have long worked collaboratively with the Department for Education (DfE) to improve educational and other rehabilitative outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

The DfE has a proactive role in the governance and delivery of many youth justice projects:

- Our new secure schools model for youth custody has been developed collaboratively with the DfE and has a strong focus on improving the provision of education through the commissioning of child-focused providers.
- We are retendering learning services in young offender institutions (YOIs) by September 2021 when existing contracts are due to expire. The DfE is part of this project and provides advice on it, particularly regarding developing service requirements and engaging schools, colleges and academy trusts.
- The DfE and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) work closely with other government departments to implement the cross-government serious violence strategy, which includes provisions for schools-based early intervention and prevention initiatives where appropriate, and to minimise the harmful impact of school exclusions.

Over the longer-term, the DfE, MoJ and other government departments are reviewing the structure and governance of the youth justice system in Wales and the entire youth secure estate to improve alignment, standards and outcomes for children

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Politics and Government: Northern Ireland****Paul Farrelly:**[\[474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of appointing a caretaker devolved government in Northern Ireland.

Julian Smith:

[Holding answer 21 October 2019]: I continue to do everything I can to get Stormont back up and running. I, as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, have no power or role to recall the Assembly, as that function is conferred on the Speaker for the Assembly. The Assembly can only be recalled by the Speaker, by agreement of the parties

TRANSPORT**■ Arriva: Ownership**

Andy McDonald: [240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of changes in the ownership of Arriva for the group's operations in the UK (a) rail and (b) bus industries.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

(a) Change of ownership will be considered in the normal way, as set at in the change of control policy statement <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-franchise-change-of-control-policy-statement>'

(b) The Department has made no assessment of this.

■ Crewe-Holyhead Railway Line

Chris Ruane: [1588]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the budget for High Speed Two has been allocated to rail infrastructure improvement projects from Holyhead to Crewe.

Paul Maynard:

Our current plans would see passengers in North Wales benefitting from an HS2 interchange at Crewe, with shorter journey times to London and improved cross-country connectivity. The Government has also funded recent major signalling and track renewals to improve reliability on the North Wales Coast Line. In addition, we have recently funded work on a strategic outline business case for delivering journey time improvements on the North Wales main line.

■ East Midlands Rail Franchise: Rolling Stock

Andy McDonald: [227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 25 September 2019 to Question 290960, what assessment he has made of the trajectory for rolling stock leasing costs on the East Midlands Railway once the Abellio franchise ends in 2026.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Referring to the Answer of 25 September 2019 to Question 290960, beyond the existing East Midlands franchise, the retention of this rolling stock within the franchise and the associated leasing costs will be dealt with through a future re-franchising competition. The assessment of the rolling stock lease costs for the future franchise would be conducted at that time.

■ First Group: Finance**Andy McDonald:** [236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment of the financial performance of First Group's existing rail franchises did his Department undertake before the announcement on 14 August 2019 of the award of the West Coast Partnership franchise to a consortium including First Group.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

First Trenitalia's bid was evaluated against the requirements and instructions set out in the Invitation to Tender for the competition. Specific financial standing tests were separately carried out on the guarantor of the First Trenitalia bid at two specific points during the competition. The first round of tests took place at Expression of Interest Stage in Spring 2017 and were repeated just prior to award of the West Coast Partnership in August 2019.

The bidder passed these tests. Details of the tests can be obtained at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578211/west-coast-partnership-franchise-competition-expression-of-interest-document.pdf

■ First TransPennine Express: Finance**Andy McDonald:** [239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he received the most recent report on the financial ratio measurement of the Transpennine franchise; and what assessment he has made of the solvency of that franchise in terms of its (a) actual financial performance to date and (b) forecast financial results.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Financial performance data, including forecast financial ratios are received every four weeks from train operators, the most recent of which was on the 27th September 2019. The Department closely monitors these commercially confidential reports to ensure that the train operators remain compliant with the obligations within their Franchise Agreements.

■ High Speed 2: Business Interests**Dame Cheryl Gillan:** [1530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many former executives of HS2 Ltd are now working for consultants providing services to HS2 Ltd.

Paul Maynard:

There are no former HS2 Ltd Executive Committee members currently working on the HS2 project. When a HS2 Executive leaves HS2 Ltd, HS2's Conflicts of Interest Panel ensures that appropriate arrangements are in place with respect to that Executive's new employer at the time of leaving HS2 to ensure there is no prejudice to HS2. The Panel remind departing Executives of their confidentiality obligations and depending upon their role have placed restrictions on such Executive to not to work

with HS2 for up to 12 months after they leave direct employment. It is not necessary to put any such arrangements in place where the former Executive leaves HS2 to join a company who does not service the rail, construction or transport industry. Any constraints placed on a person's ability to earn a living must be compliant with legal obligations around restraint of trade. Further, any supplier bidding for work with HS2 Ltd is required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest which would include where former HS2 Ltd employees are part of the bidding or proposed delivery team.

■ High Speed 2: Conflict of Interests

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[\[1531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the companies working for HS2 Ltd have no conflicts of interest.

Paul Maynard:

HS2 Ltd has strict protocols in place to prevent any perceived or potential conflicts of interest. All staff are required to declare any conflicts of interest upon joining HS2 Ltd. An established HS2 Ltd Conflicts of Interest Panel is in place to review conflicts of interest matters both in relation to employees, procurements and the supply chain and to ensure appropriate and consistent actions are taken to mitigate any risks. As part of the procurement process, all bidders must declare any potential, perceived or actual conflicts the mitigating controls which are overseen by the Panel mentioned above.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: EU Countries

Chris Ruane:

[\[71\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to page 22 of the Government's No Deal Readiness report, if he will place in the Library the list of objective criteria for assessing priority need by which European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) permits have been allocated; and how many ECMT permits have been allocated as of 14 October 2019.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The criteria used when assessing ECMT permit applications between November 2018 and March 2019 were set out in the Haulage Permits Guidance document which was published in November 2018 and a copy has been placed in the Library.

With regards to ECMT permit numbers, as of 14 October 2019, 92 ECMT short-term permits have been issued and 774 annual ECMT permits have been issued for 2019.

■ Northern: Finance

Andy McDonald:

[\[238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he received the most recent report on the financial ratio measurement of the Northern franchise; and what assessment he has made of the solvency of that franchise in respect of its (a) actual financial performance to date and (b) forecast financial results.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Financial performance data, including forecast financial ratios are received every four weeks from train operators, the most recent of which was on the 27th September 2019. The Department closely monitors these commercially confidential reports to ensure that the train operators remain compliant with the obligations within their Franchise Agreements.

■ Railways: Construction**Andy McDonald:****[224]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment has he made of the capacity of the rail supply chain to deliver (a) Network Rail's Control Period 6 enhancements pipeline, (b) his Department's market led proposals for rail and (c) the construction of HS2.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Rail Sector Deal, published in December 2018, set out a new approach to partnership working between the Government and the rail supply sector. We are working closely together to ensure both that the sector has appropriate visibility of future work and that the sector is investing sufficiently in people, processes and skills that will be needed to deliver this additional investment. The Long Term Deployment Plan for the Digital Railway was published earlier this year and on 16 October we published the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

■ Roads: North Herefordshire**Bill Wiggin:****[64]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to encourage responsible driving and improve road safety in North Herefordshire.

George Freeman:

The Government is committed to improving the safety of all road users on a national basis. Our recent publication of the Road Safety Statement, 'A Lifetime of Road Safety', describes in detail the Department's intention to undertake a set of actions in the coming years aimed at improving road safety. For example, one of those actions is for the Department to establish a rural roads working group to share experience on improving rural road safety and to work together to tackle the key issues.

The Road Safety Statement can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-2019-a-lifetime-of-road-safety>

The Government also recognises the importance of educating drivers about driving responsibly. In addition to advice in the Highway Code and on www.gov.uk, the THINK! Campaigns are designed to educate drivers and promote road safety, which includes supporting a change in behaviour when driving.

■ Rolling Stock: Procurement

Andy McDonald: [\[226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference the Answer of 25 September 2019 to Question 290960, what assessment he has made of the merits for the public purse of giving a train operator with a seven-year rail franchise contract the authority to procure rail rolling stock which will be in use for 30 years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The rolling stock market is a highly competitive environment that has delivered value for money benefits in both pricing and quality. Train operators procure rolling stock in partnership with the ultimate owners of the fleet who then continue to carry the long-term risk of competing their fleet into future franchises.

■ South Western Railway: Finance

Andy McDonald: [\[231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what date he received the most recent report on the financial ratio measurement of the South Western Railway franchise; and what assessment he has made of the solvency of that franchise's (a) financial performance to date and (b) forecast financial results.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Financial performance data, including forecast financial ratios are received every four weeks from train operators, the most recent of which was on the 27th September 2019. The Department closely monitors these commercially confidential reports to ensure that the train operators remain compliant with the obligations within their Franchise Agreements.

■ Transport: Exhaust Emissions

Paul Farrelly: [\[1602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan will apply to international (a) aviation and (b) shipping; and what steps he is taking to ensure that those sectors achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

George Freeman:

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan will consider the transport sector as a whole and the increased contribution that all modes need to make to achieve an economy-wide net zero target by 2050. Given the global nature of the aviation and shipping sectors sector, and their climate change impacts, effective and coordinated international action remains essential. Unilateral action by a single state leads to the risk that these highly mobile carbon emissions are simply moved overseas, therefore failing to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. The UK will continue its leadership role at the IMO pushing for the most ambitious measures to reduce GHG emissions from ships and negotiate for ICAO to agree a long-term emissions reduction goal by its 41st Assembly in 2022. Government will keep our approach to the inclusion of

international shipping and aviation emissions in our legislation under review, taking account of progress in the IMO and ICAO.

■ UK Trade with EU: Freight

Andy McDonald: [\[230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what provisions exist within the contracts for freight capacity signed by his Department on 11 October 2019 for changes to the date of the UK's departure from the EU.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

It remains the Government's clearly stated ambition to leave the EU on 31 October. However, if we leave with the deal and it is determined that the Government-secured freight capacity is not needed from 31 October, contracts would be terminated. The freight capacity framework is designed to cover a 4 year period and allow Government to draw down capacity to deal with issues beyond Brexit, for example, any repetition of the disruption associated with the industrial action taken by MyFerryLink workers in 2015.

TREASURY

■ 11 Downing Street: Operating Costs

Tommy Sheppard: [\[1724\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the running costs of No.11 Downing Street were in each of the last ten years.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The No 11 Downing Street running costs for the last ten years are in the table below: The figures cover Rent, Maintenance, Furniture & Fittings and Official Entertainment

	SPEND £
2009-10	436,909
2010-11	351,054
2011-12	553,903
2012-13	545,073
2013-14	643,414
2014-15	561,089
2015-16	524,381
2016-17	698,672

	SPEND £
2017-18	690,648
2018-19	812,587

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Neil Coyle: [\[1687\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when excise duty was last reduced for (a) wine, (b) beer and (c) spirits.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Wine duty was last reduced in 1984. Both beer duty and spirits were last reduced in 2015.

■ Bank Mellat

Janet Daby: [\[337\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish (a) the amount paid to Bank Mellat to settle their recent lawsuit against the Government and (b) how much the Government spent on defending the claim.

John Glen:

Bank Mellat's claims have now been concluded and the amount paid in respect of the settlement was €91,352,709.35. HM Treasury made a payment of £1.01m in 2013/14 towards Bank Mellat's legal costs following Bank Mellat's previous success in the Supreme Court. Beyond this payment and the cost of settlement, the total HM Treasury costs associated with defending the Bank Mellat case as at 14th October are £19,715,202.91. This sum was spent on a variety of legal and expert costs over the course of 10 years defending the case, following Bank Mellat's original claim of damages of \$4.3 billion.

■ Barclays: Post Office

Jane Dodds: [\[1792\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Barclays Bank on the effect on rural areas of the bank's planned withdrawal from the banking framework with Post Office Ltd.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with many organisations in the public and private sectors on a variety of issues.

The Post Office Limited has recently renegotiated the commercial terms and service enhancements for Banking Framework 2, which will take effect from January 2020. The Government welcomes this agreement that, alongside other work by industry,

regulators and Government to safeguard cash for those who need it, will ensure that 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers continue to have access to everyday banking services at the Post Office.

Barclays has extended its agreement with Post Office Limited, though its customers won't be able to withdraw cash over the counter at post offices from January 2020. Barclays' customers will still be able to check their balance, and pay in cash and cheques. Whilst the Government is committed to maintaining access to cash, and has set up the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group to help ensure this, the decision over precisely how to provide access to banking services is rightly a commercial decision for banks and Government does not intervene in these decisions.

If Barclays customers value withdrawing cash over the counter using the Post Office, they may wish to consider switching to an alternative bank using the Current Account Switch Service (CASS). The switch service is free to use, comes with a guarantee to protect customers from financial loss if something goes wrong, and redirects any payments mistakenly sent to the old account, providing further assurance for customers. This means that customers are more able than ever to hold their banks to account by voting with their feet, and that banks are incentivised to work hard to retain their existing customers and attract new ones. More information about CASS is available at:

www.currentaccountswitch.co.uk

■ Debts

Catherine West:

[1758]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what guidance and support his Department provides to people experiencing problem debt.

John Glen:

To simplify the existing public financial guidance landscape and offer more holistic support to consumers, the Government established the Money and Pensions Service in January 2019.

The Government has increased public funding for free professional debt advice to almost £56m this year, enough to provide support to 560,000 people in England.

To support people in problem debt, the Government is introducing a Breathing Space scheme that will provide them with a 60-day period where interest and charges on their debts are frozen and enforcement action from creditors is paused.

Breathing Space will encourage people to access debt advice and will allow them the time and space to fully engage with professional support, helping them identify a sustainable solution to their debts.

■ Equal Pay: Reviews

Chris Stephens:

[\[1731\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many equal pay reviews there have been in HMRC since 2010; what the dates were of those reviews; and whether HMRC plans to undertake an equal pay review in 2019.

Jesse Norman:

In line with Government policy, HMRC's Equal Pay Audit is produced every three years. Since 2010, Equal Pay Audits have been conducted for 2013 (published November 2015) and 2016 (published December 2018). HMRC are currently working on the 2019 Equal Pay Audit which will be published in due course.

■ Football Pools: Excise Duties

Philip Davies:

[\[487\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing pool betting duty to 10 per cent.

Mr Simon Clarke:

No recent estimate has been made. Reducing Pool Betting Duty to 10% is likely to have a negligible effect on the Football Pools, but could put revenue at risk particularly through incentivising switching of products from fixed odds bets to pooled bets.

HM Treasury however keeps all taxes under active review.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[871\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will reduce pool betting duty from 15 per cent to 10 per cent.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has no current plans to reduce Pool Betting Duty. Reducing it to 10% is likely to have a negligible effect on The Football Pools, but could put revenue at risk particularly through incentivising the switching of products from fixed odds bets to pooled bets.

HM Treasury however keeps all taxes, including Pool Betting Duty, under active review.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Stephen Crabb:

[\[126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on the level of local housing allowance.

Rishi Sunak:

The Government has frozen most working-age benefits, including LHA rates, for 4 years from 2016-17, as part of the effort to bring welfare spending under control, and ensure that it always pays more to be in work than to be out of work and claiming

benefits. From April next year, the Government expects increases to working age benefits will resume in line with inflation, including the LHA.

■ **Mobile Homes: Excise Duties**

Dan Jarvis: [\[173\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 9 September 2019 to Question 284157, what assessment he has made of the economic effect on the UK motorhome industry of reclassifying motorhomes as cars for tax purposes.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government uses Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) to encourage the take-up of vehicles with low carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to help meet our legally binding climate change targets. Transport is the largest sector for UK greenhouse gas emissions (27%), of which road transport accounts for over 90%.

Whilst the Government recognises the concerns of the leisure industry, tax is only one of many factors impacting purchasing decisions. Like all taxes, the Government is keeping the VED treatment of motorhomes under review. Any changes will be considered by the Chancellor and announced at fiscal events.

■ **Sleeping Rough**

Chris Ruane: [\[1587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is still the Government's policy to allocate taxes raised by the stamp duty surcharge on overseas property investors to fund programmes to tackle rough sleeping.

Jesse Norman:

At Budget 2018, the Government announced it would consult on a new Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) surcharge of 1% on non-UK residents buying residential property in England and Northern Ireland.

This measure is designed to help control house price growth, and to ensure that those resident in the UK can get on the housing ladder.

The revenue raised by the surcharge will be used to tackle rough sleeping alongside the £422 million funding announced at the 2019 Spending Review, in addition to the £1.2 billion the Government committed to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the last Spending Review period.

The Government consulted on the surcharge earlier this year and is considering the responses.

■ **Tobacco: Smuggling**

Charlie Elphicke: [\[229\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what powers he has to sanction tobacco manufacturers for failing to control their supply chain and prevent contraband tobacco entering the UK.

Charlie Elphicke: [\[233\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of tobacco manufacturers' ability to control their supply chain to prevent contraband tobacco coming into the UK.

Charlie Elphicke: [\[266\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with tobacco manufacturers on the adequacy of controls in their supply chains.

Charlie Elphicke: [\[540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with tobacco manufacturers on preventing the smuggling of their product into the UK.

Charlie Elphicke: [\[541\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with tobacco manufacturers on the control of their supply chain.

Mr Simon Clarke:

In 2006, Parliament introduced stringent rules requiring all UK tobacco manufacturers to control their supply chains. These rules required them to take steps to avoid supplying cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco to persons who are likely to smuggle them into the UK or resupply them to other persons who are likely to do the same.

Tobacco manufacturers can face penalties of up to £5m for failing to comply with the rules.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) robustly challenge tobacco manufacturers' supply chain policies and procedures to ensure their continued compliance with the rules. This has involved ongoing contact and regular meetings between HMRC's Large Business Team and manufacturers since the legislation was introduced.

One aspect of this ongoing contact is the requirement that manufacturers inspect seizures of over 100,000 cigarettes or 50kg of hand rolling tobacco and provide a summary of how those goods, if confirmed genuine, got in to the hands of smugglers. Large Business review and challenge these summaries to ensure manufacturers have taken appropriate action, in line with their own published supply chain policies.

Due to taxpayer confidentiality it is not possible to provide comment on the progress of HMRC's discussions with individual businesses about their supply chain controls.

■ Treasury: Pay

Chris Stephens: [\[1737\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the pay system in HMRC has been changed to take account of the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruling on Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council v Mr G Willetts and Others on holiday pay and voluntary overtime; and whether affected workers in HMRC have been given back pay as a result of that ruling.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have been following the guidance issued by Civil Service Employee Policy (CSEP) following this judgment. It is the responsibility of Departments to implement changes to their policy and contract framework, and HMRC are awaiting guidance due shortly from CSEP to support HMRC in doing so.

HMRC have made a business case to Treasury to ask for pay flexibility to allow HMRC to negotiate a new pay and reward framework with the trade unions. HMRC are planning to implement these changes from June next year and will make back payments where applicable. HMRC have not made any payments specifically following the ruling.

WALES**■ Wales Office: Health****Chris Ruane:****[917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether his Department uses ONS estimates of personal wellbeing in formulating policy; and what policies his Department has introduced to improve personal well-being in the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales (OSSW) takes the wellbeing of our staff very seriously and is committed to providing a high level of support. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) employ staff on behalf of OSSW and therefore the Office adopts and applies MoJ wellbeing policies to our staff.

MoJ published a report on staff mental health and wellbeing in August 2019:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/827763/moj-voluntary-reporting.pdf.

The report covers the four positive wellbeing measures used by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for the UK population: life satisfaction, sense of purpose, happiness and anxiety.

The Office uses a wide range of MoJ policies that support wellbeing, including a carers charter and passport. During the past 12 months, MoJ has introduced guidance on supporting victims of domestic abuse (November 2018) and a policy to support EU nationals (August 2019). In August, MoJ introduced the Gender Identity and Intersex Policy and Guidance for staff who identify as transgender, non-binary and intersex. This sets out standards of behaviours and useful resources to ensure everyone is treated fairly at work.

OSSW staff can access a range of MoJ wellbeing services which include: access to internal mental health first aiders, the 24/7 hour employee assistance helpline, occupational health referral and counselling sessions (if deemed appropriate) and membership of relevant employee support networks.

In addition to MoJ policies, the Office engages with other Government Departments in the UK Governance Group to raise staff awareness of wellbeing techniques. This includes discussion of staff wellbeing at staff events and senior leadership meetings.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Age: Discrimination

Alex Chalk:

[735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to tackle ageism in the workplace.

Mims Davies:

The Equality Act 2010, provides strong protection against direct and indirect age discrimination in employment and makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an employee or a job applicant because of their age, unless the employer can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

To tackle ageism in the workplace, Business in the Community have produced a toolkit which provides guidance and support to employers in getting started with age inclusion in the workplace and includes a three-step process based on Look, Listen, Act. <https://age.bitc.org.uk/all-resources/toolkits/getting-started-age-look-listen-act-toolkit-will-guide-and-support-getting>

More widely, Government is taking steps to ensure that older workers are supported to remain in or return to the labour market, the Government has removed the Default Retirement Age meaning most people can choose when to retire, and extended the right to request flexible working to all employees with 26 weeks' continuous service with their employer.

In February 2017, the UK Government published "Fuller Working Lives: a partnership approach" to set out the role employers, individuals and Government can play in supporting fuller working lives.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587654/fuller-working-lives-a-partnership-approach.pdf.

The Government has also appointed Andy Briggs as Business Champion for Older Workers to spearhead the Government's work to support employers to retain, retrain and recruit older workers. Andy Briggs and the Business In The Community Age at Work leadership team actively promote the benefits of older workers to employers across England.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Equal Pay

Chris Stephens:

[1730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many equal pay reviews there have been in her Department since 2010; what the dates were of those reviews; and whether her Department plans to undertake an equal pay review in 2019.

Mims Davies:

DWP is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and which promote equality of opportunity. As an employer, we are also committed to equality and valuing diversity within our workforce. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments are embedded in our day to day working practices with all our customers, colleagues and partners.

The Department is legally required to consider the impact of our policies and processes on people who share a protected characteristic, and to document our findings in order that we can provide evidence on this if challenged. The Equality Act does not specify a prescribed Equality Analysis process, however, since 2010 we have completed department wide Equal Pay Audits for 2011, 2014 and 2016. These were completed in 2012, 2016 and 2018 retrospectively. A further review is scheduled for 2019.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Health**Chris Ruane:****[903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 13 September 2018 to Question 171307, what steps her Department takes to monitor the personal wellbeing of claimants.

Justin Tomlinson:

The services provided by the Department are designed to make a positive difference to citizen's life circumstances, through helping more people into work, simplifying the benefits systems, providing support to disabled people and providing security in later life.

DWP has over 100m transactions with customers each year. We do not record well-being measures against each of these transactions, however our case managers are trained to take action in the case of customers discussing suicide or self-harm, alongside being able to signpost customers to additional support such as bereavement assistance where appropriate.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Public Appointments**Jon Trickett:****[1579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which public appointments she is responsible for.

Guy Opperman:

The public appointments that the department is responsible for making are set out in the Schedule to the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019.

<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-Public-Appointments-Order-In-Council.pdf>

■ Employment: Young People

Paul Farrelly:

[1603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the final report from the Young people's future health inquiry entitled A healthy foundation for the future published in October 2019, what steps the Government is taking to establish a job market that offers young people secure and rewarding work.

Mims Davies:

The Government is committed to supporting young people into work. We aim to ensure that everyone, no matter what their start in life, is given the very best chance of getting into work.

The DWP Youth Obligation Support Programme is currently delivered to young people aged 18-21 making a new claim to Universal Credit. We provide additional tailored support to enable young people to achieve their goals.

In January 2019 we announced the extension of the Mentoring Circles initiative from the ethnic minority community to all young people who could benefit from such support. Mentoring circles support 16-24 year olds by giving them an opportunity to build on their employability skills. By facilitating an interaction with employers this initiative helps to provide young job seekers with access to and interaction with role models in the workplace.

■ Local Housing Allowance

Stephen Crabb:

[456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an estimate of the cost to the public purse of restoring Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile.

Will Quince:

We estimate the cost would be about £800 million in 2020/21, excluding any changes in behaviour by tenants and landlords.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Scotland

Hugh Gaffney:

[1934]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of personal independence payment claims which have been rejected in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available.

Justin Tomlinson:

The latest available data on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims cleared by type of decision (e.g. awarded, disallowed or withdrawn) can be found in the 'PIP clearances' table at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>. The statistics provide monthly breakdowns up until the end of July 2019, the latest available data, and can also be broken down by region; England, Wales and Scotland.

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

■ Thomas Cook: Insolvency

Ms Lisa Forbes:

[732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations she has received from Peterborough City Council for financial support for local welfare services following the collapse of Thomas Cook.

Mims Davies:

We are working closely with Peterborough City Council through Opportunity Peterborough to deliver the support required. 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.

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 support available to help them find a job. We are working with a wide range of employers to provide support to former employees of Thomas Cook.

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 (part of Peterborough City Council). 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.

As current resources are adequate for the need to be met there has been no request made by Peterborough City Council or by the Department for additional financial support.

We continue to work with Peterborough City Council to monitor the situation and consider further support as required.

■ Universal Credit

Mark Tami:

[1598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is her Department's policy for Jobcentre staff proactively to inform universal credit claimants that they should make a claim to new-style ESA or new-style JSA if they are likely to be eligible.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave to questions 43 and 482 on 21 October.

■ Universal Credit: Fraud**Mike Amesbury:** [\[1784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the total cost to her Department of universal credit scams to date.

Guy Opperman:

If a claimant has been the victim of a scam, and has not benefited from an advance in any way, they will not be asked to repay it. The Department considers all cases on their own merits and decisions are made on the strength of the evidence provided.

Completed investigations thus far, have shown that the total amount claimed in fraudulent Universal Credit (UC) advances as of 30th September 2019 was £1,868,000 (rounded to the nearest thousand).

It is important to clarify that these are not losses. The Department will endeavour to recover this money and pursue fraudsters. Recovery has already started in some of these cases.

Mike Amesbury: [\[1785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) individuals and (b) third party individuals investigated for universal credit fraud have been (a) referred for prosecution and (b) successfully prosecuted.

Guy Opperman:

The Department takes this issue very seriously and we are committed to taking appropriate action to deter this fraud.

There are 28 individual cases being prepared for prosecution and 1 successful individual prosecution.

There has been 1 successful third party prosecution and a 2nd third party case is due in court next month.

Mike Amesbury: [\[1786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase public awareness of universal credit scams.

Guy Opperman:

We have raised awareness of recent Universal Credit advance payment fraud via a dedicated social media campaign, which reminds people of the importance of safeguarding their identity. Staff throughout the Department are actively encouraged to report any instances of potentially fraudulent activity for investigation.

The Department is committed to the prevention, detection and investigation of all types of benefit fraud. We take the issue of misuse of the welfare system very seriously and will continue to use appropriate penalties to deter fraudulent behaviour which can be very distressing for innocent victims.

If any claimant has concerns about the safety of their personal information, they should speak to a member of Departmental staff, or get help from the national

reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, Action Fraud, online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by telephone on 0300 123 2040, which is promoted through display materials in Jobcentres.

Mike Amesbury: [1787]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is her Department's policy to reinstate legacy benefits to people who have been migrated from those benefits to universal credit as a result of a fraud that was not their fault.

Guy Opperman:

The Department will review each case where a claim to Universal Credit was prompted by fraudulent activity, considering the extent to which the claimant was involved.

If there is clear evidence that the claimant had no involvement in the fraud, and where the claimant wishes us to do so, we will consider re-instating DWP legacy benefits.

Mike Amesbury: [1788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of claimants of universal credit that were referred for investigation into fraud were referred after her Department introduced a requirement for claimants to attend a Jobcentre before applying for an advance payment.

Guy Opperman:

From 18th September 2019, claimants are required to attend an interview at a jobcentre to verify their identity before claiming a Universal Credit (UC) advance. This change is helping protect claimants from identity fraud and becoming victims of third party scams.

The staff referrals we have received for UC advances fraud since 18th September 2019 equate to 6.3% of the total referrals received to date.

It is important to clarify that the majority of these referrals will relate to advance claims made prior to 18th September 2019.

Frank Field: [1899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether universal credit advances fraud was noted in her Department's risk register.

Guy Opperman:

The Department keeps Risk Registers at various levels in the organisation. These risk registers are designed to ensure that key risks are captured, monitored and mitigated.

I can confirm that Universal Credit advances fraud is recorded on Departmental risk registers as explained in the 16th October 2019 letter from the Department to the Honourable Member.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Crawley

Henry Smith:

[165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps her Department has taken to support businesses in Crawley.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 October 2019. The correct answer should have been:

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is committed to making the UK the best place to start and grow a business, ensuring all businesses have access to the advice and support they need ~~to succeed to start, grow, and scale up their businesses.~~

All businesses can access core services, information and guidance on starting up and running a business, as well as their statutory rights and obligations, on our GOV.UK sites and www.gov.uk/browse/business. The Business Finance and Support Finder tool on the website provides information on how to access a wide range of Government-backed financial support for start-up businesses, such as funding and grant schemes. The Government backed British Business Bank (BBB), as of July 2019, has provided funding of £6.6bn to over 89,000 businesses. In addition, since 2012, the Start-Up Loans Company (now part of BBB) has delivered over 67,000 loans worth over £534m. In Crawley they have issued 99 loans since 2012, worth over £680,000.

This Government continues to work with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to drive forward local growth. Through three rounds of competitive Growth Deals, Government has invested over £9 billion of funding, including £304.3 million to Coast to Capital LEP, which covers Crawley, to empower local areas to reach their potential, boosting national productivity and growth.

We have also supported and invested in the creation of a network of 38 Growth Hubs. Businesses in the Crawley constituency can access business advice through the Coast to Capital Growth Hub. Led and governed by the Coast to Capital LEP, the Growth Hub provides a free, impartial, 'single point of contact' to help businesses in the area identify and access the right support for them at the right time no matter their size or sector. This support includes helping businesses prepare for Brexit. In 2018-19 the Coast to Capital Growth Hub supported over 1,503 businesses and helped more than 313 individuals start a business.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **ENABLE Funding Scheme**

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

[\[HCWS29\]](#)

ENABLE Funding' is a scheme administered by the British Business Bank which provides senior funding (effectively at commercial terms) to delivery partners and is designed to increase funding diversification for leasing and asset finance providers and peer-to-peer lenders, with the overall purpose of increasing the supply of debt to underlying small and medium-sized enterprises.

Since the scheme began in 2014, senior secured funding has been provided to various delivery partners and their receivable portfolios have been 'warehoused' in a special purpose entity. The aggregate sum of certain receivable portfolios reached a desired critical mass whereby a capital markets refinancing (or securitisation) can proceed, repaying the funding. The transaction is expected to complete before the end of the financial year 2019/20.

As part of the transaction, a credit enhancement in the form of a capped second loss guarantee will be agreed. The guarantee issued by the Department is capped at £66m and the 'second loss' element means that the participating delivery partners will fund and suffer an agreed amount up to the first loss threshold should defaults in the portfolio occur.

The guarantee is not expected to last for more than seven years and in practice will likely be much shorter. The beneficiary is the securitisation vehicle (a newly incorporated entity) which will purchase the facilities as part of the transaction. The Department will receive a commercial fee in return for the guarantee.

As a matter of record, I will be laying a Departmental Minute today explaining the procedure followed and containing a description of the liability undertaken.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Manchester Arena Attack**

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

[\[HCWS28\]](#)

I am announcing today the establishment by the Home Office of an inquiry, under the Inquiries Act 2005, to investigate the deaths of, John Atkinson, Courtney Boyle, Kelly Brewster, Georgina Callander, Olivia Campbell-Hardy, Liam Curry, Wendy Fawell, Martyn Hett, Alison Howe, Megan Hurley, Nell Jones, Michelle Kiss, Angelika Klis, Marcin Klis, Sorrell Leczkowski, Lisa Lees, Eilidh MacLeod, Elaine Mclver, Saffie-Rose Roussos, Chloe Rutherford, Philip Tron and Jane Carolyn Tweddle in the horrific attack at Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017.

The Inquiry will be chaired by The Honourable Sir John Saunders.

Sir John Saunders is a retired High Court judge who was nominated by the Lord Chief Justice to lead the investigation and inquest into the deaths at Manchester Arena. In accordance with section 3(1) of the Act, this inquiry will be undertaken by Sir John alone as Chair.

I am establishing an inquiry after careful consideration of advice from Sir John that this is necessary to permit all relevant evidence to be heard. This is an important step in ensuring that the families of those who lost their lives in this terrible attack get the answers that they need.

The inquiry will have the same scope as the current inquest, which will be adjourned after the establishment of the inquiry.

I will place a copy of the Terms of Reference for the inquiry in the Libraries of both Houses.

The inquiry's investigations will now be a matter for the Chair. As the sponsoring department the Home Office will provide support and ensure that the inquiry has the resources that it needs.

TREASURY

■ ECOFIN: 10 October 2019

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid):

[\[HCWS30\]](#)

A meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) was held in Luxembourg on 10 October 2019. The UK was represented by Mark Bowman (Director General, International Finance, HM Treasury). The Council discussed the following:

Budgetary Instrument for Convergence and Competitiveness for the Euro Area

The European Commission presented the governance framework on the budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness for the euro area.

Current Financial Services Legislative Proposals

The Finnish Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals in the field of financial services.

European Court of Auditors' Annual Report

The President of the Court of Auditors presented the Auditors' report on the implementation of the budget of the European Union for the 2018 financial year.

The European Financial Architecture for Development

The chair of the high-level group of wise persons on the European financial architecture for development presented the main findings of their report to the Council. This was followed by an exchange of views.

Implementation of the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Action Plan

The Council held an exchange of views on the progress made in implementing the AML Action Plan to consider the future strategic priorities in this area.

Anti-Money Laundering Directive: Policy towards "high-risk third countries"

The Council held an exchange of views on the policy towards AML-related "high-risk third countries".

European Semester 2019 – Lessons Learnt

The Council held an exchange of views on lessons learnt from the European Semester 2019.

Preparation of the G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and of the IMF Annual Meetings

The Council approved the EU's G20 Terms of Reference and International Monetary and Financial Committee Statement, ahead of the Annual Meetings in Washington DC.

Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action

The Finnish presented the state of play of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action.

Appointment of a Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank

The Council adopted a recommendation to the European Council on the appointment of a new member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank.

Capital Markets Union

The Commission informed the Council on its plans on the Capital Markets Union and the Presidency outlined the next steps.

Status of the Implementation of Financial Services Legislation

The Council took stock of the status of the implementation of financial services legislation.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **International Labour Organisation Recommendation 205 concerning Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment (Mims Davies): **[\[HCWS27\]](#)**

The 106th Session of the International Labour Conference 2017 adopted Recommendation 205 concerning Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience. International Labour Organisation (ILO) Recommendations, adopted following negotiation amongst ILO member state governments and business and union representatives, serve as non-binding guidelines. The Government welcomes this Recommendation and recognises its importance in its global context. It acts as a guide for world of work related measures to prevent and respond to the effects of crises on

economies and societies. The Recommendation focuses on recovery and reconstruction in post-conflict and disaster situations. This Recommendation will not have any impact on the UK as it is consistent with UK Government policies.

The Constitution of the International Labour Organisation requires that the Government bring the Recommendation before Parliament. I will place an Explanatory Memorandum and the text of the Recommendation in the House Libraries later today.