



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 31 October 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 31 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

■ Attorney General: Living Wage

Matthew Pennycook:

[R] [\[6469\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many staff of his Department are paid less than the London Living Wage; and what requirements his Department places on contractors to pay the London Living Wage to London-based staff.

Michael Ellis:

This government is committed to paying people a decent living wage, which is being addressed through the statutory National Living Wage. In April 2019, the National Living Wage increased to £8.21 per hour, handing a full-time worker a further £690 annual pay rise. By 2024 the National Living Wage will rise to £10.50 per hour, reaching 66% of median UK earnings. The scope will be expanded to everyone aged 21 and over and is expected to benefit over 4 million low paid workers.

The Government will always award contracts on the basis of the best value for money for the taxpayer.

No staff directly employed by the Law Officers' Departments (Attorney General's Office, Government Legal Department, Crown Prosecution Service, Serious Fraud Office and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate) are paid less than the Real, or London Living Wage for London-based staff. Contractors must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage, or the National Living Wage for workers over 25, in line with statutory requirements, but the London Living Wage is not a requirement.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Age: Research

Stephen Metcalfe:

[\[220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding is being invested by UKRI in understanding the biological mechanisms of ageing.

Chris Skidmore:

Through the Ageing Society Grand Challenge (ASGC), the Government has set an ambitious mission to "ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035".

UKRI is a key part in addressing this Challenge. We have announced £98m of funding for healthcare innovation to support healthy aging, through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, and £69.5 million through UKRI's Strategic Priorities Fund to unlock new treatments that allow people to lead healthier and longer lives.

In 2018/19, UKRI spent £81.9m on a huge breadth of healthy ageing research. Within this, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and Medical Research Council (MRC) are the main funders of research into the biological mechanism of ageing. In 2017/18:

- MRC spent £39.1m on research directly related to ageing, as part of this, £14.9m was specifically for research directly relating to the biological mechanisms of ageing.
- BBSRC spent £16.8m on research that covers the biological mechanisms for ageing.

■ Asda: Conditions of Employment

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[6440]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure there is agreement between (a) Asda's owners, (b) Asda's employees and (c) trade unions on the terms of the new deal, known as Contract 6, being offered by Asda to its employees.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Government has regular engagement with retailers.

A legal framework exists which ensures that employers should always treat their employees fairly.

In general, the terms and conditions of employment are for negotiation and agreement between employers and employees (or their representatives). Once agreed, however, they form a legally binding contract of employment. While it is always open to either party to seek to renegotiate the terms of the contract, if the employer changes any of the terms without the employee's agreement, the employee may be entitled to seek legal redress.

Both employers and employees are strongly encouraged to follow the guidance available on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/your-employment-contract-how-it-can-be-changed> when considering changing their terms and conditions of employment.

■ Business: Investment

Mr David Davis:

[6204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the effect of share-buy-back schemes on business investment.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department commissioned research in 2018 to establish whether share buybacks are being misused to hit performance targets, inflate executive pay and reduce business investment. The research was published on 19 July 2019. It found no relationship between share repurchases and investment and no evidence to

suggest that buybacks are being used systematically to artificially hit earnings per share (EPS) targets.

The research did, however, reveal that the presence of EPS targets in executive remuneration plans correlates with lower levels of investment. The study said that it would be premature to draw firm conclusions but that the area warranted further research. The Department intends to follow this up and plans to commission further research into whether there is a direct link (rather than through the use of buybacks) between executive pay targets and levels of investment and between performance targets and short-term executive decision-making.

■ Companies: Registration

Mark Tami: [\[5411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of checks on company registrations in England and Wales.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Registrar of Companies (Companies House) has a statutory obligation to incorporate a new company on receipt of a validly completed application. When registering a new company, the Registrar is carrying out a function of the state on behalf of the Government.

Companies House undertakes numerous checks on the validity of information, both at incorporation and throughout the life of the company as new information is submitted.

The Department consulted earlier this year on a broad package of possible reforms to Companies House to ensure it is fit for the future and continues to contribute to the UK's business environment. They are designed to deliver more reliably accurate information on the companies register and enhance Companies House work in support of UK law enforcement efforts to tackle economic crime.

■ Company Law

Mark Tami: [\[5410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of incentives for directors to apply for voluntary strike-off to dispose of unwanted companies.

Kelly Tolhurst:

A company can apply to Companies House for a voluntary strike off if it has not traded in the last three months. The process is set out in the Companies Act 2006 and is designed to safeguard those who are likely to be affected by a company's dissolution. Guidance is also available for directors, and is available on gov.uk.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: International Men's Day**Philip Davies:** [\[6317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans her Department has to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2019.

Nadhim Zahawi:

No one should suffer unfair treatment because of their gender. Every year International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight how outcomes for men and boys can be improved and to talk about some of the important work going on every day across Government to do this.

The work ranges from the introduction of shared parental leave, which allows men to take time away from the workplace and bond with their new children, benefitting that crucial long-term relationship for both parent and child, to our programme tackling LGBT bullying in schools which seeks to protect those who may be victimised by outdated and stereotypical ideas of what it means to be a 'real man'.

Government is also working with local authorities to ensure their suicide prevention plans support more men, and in the Domestic Abuse Bill we propose to create a statutory definition of domestic abuse that makes clear men also can be victims of this abhorrent crime.

■ Economic Growth: Midlands**Paul Farrelly:** [\[6257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Midlands Engine policy focuses on the densely populated areas that surround big cities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As part of levelling up the regions the government is committed to a Midlands Engine Strategy to stimulate growth and increase productivity across the whole of the Midlands Engine region including densely populated areas that surround big cities. For example, we made commitments in the 2017 Midlands Engine Strategy to launch 5G tests beds to enhance digital connectivity in the region, including a Worcestershire test bed; to support the eight Enterprise Zones across the Midlands, including the Ceramic Valley Enterprise Zone in Staffordshire; and to allocate £392m of Local Growth Fund funding which is supporting a wide range of projects including £8.5 million for first phase improvements to the Hanley-Bentilee link road, and £6.9 million to support the formation of an Advanced Manufacturing Hub in Stoke and Staffordshire.

■ Electricity: Prices**Jessica Morden:** [\[3650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether she plans to respond to the recommendations in the report, The Energy Price Gap, published

by UK Steel in October 2019 on reducing the difference between the price of industrial electricity in (a) the UK and (b) Germany and France.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 October 2019]: We are looking carefully at the analysis in the UK Steel report. The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses to ensure our economy remains strong and competitive. Our policies include providing electricity cost compensation and exemption support to maintain the UK's reputation as an attractive location for energy intensive industries including steel. The £315 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund will also support businesses with high energy use to cut their bills and emissions.

■ **Fireworks**

Paul Farrelly:

[\[6253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of restricting firework use to (a) licensed public displays at certain times of year and (b) organised events.

Kelly Tolhurst:

I have asked the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) to compile a fact-based evidence base on the key issues that have been raised around fireworks. This includes looking at data around noise and disturbance, anti-social behaviour, non-compliance, environmental impact, and the impact on humans and animals.

The aim of the evidence base is to build a full picture of the data around fireworks in order to identify the key issues and what action - if any - is appropriate.

■ **Green Deal Scheme: Appeals**

Mr Paul Sweeney:

[\[5086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many appeals her Department has received under the Green Deal Scheme in the last 12 months, and in which constituencies the appellants are based.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

230 appeals have been received in the last 12 months. The following table shows the constituencies in which the appellants are based.

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	NUMBER OF APPEALS
England	
Barrow and Furness	1
Batley and Spen	2
Berwick-upon-Tweed	1
Birmingham, Erdington	1

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	NUMBER OF APPEALS
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	1
Birmingham, Ladywood	1
Birmingham, Perry Barr	1
Bishop Auckland	1
Blackley and Broughton	1
Blackpool South	2
Blaydon	2
Blyth Valley	1
Bolton North East	1
Bolton South East	1
Bradford East	1
Bristol East	1
Bury North	1
Bury South	1
Carlisle	1
City of Durham	2
Cleethorpes	1
Colne Valley	1
Copeland	1
Daventry	1
Ealing Central and Acton	1
Easington	1
Fylde	1
Gloucester	1
Grantham and Stamford	1
Great Grimsby	1

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	NUMBER OF APPEALS
Halton	1
Hartlepool	2
Houghton and Sunderland South	2
Huddersfield	1
Huntingdon	1
Ipswich	1
Jarrow	1
Kingston upon Hull East	1
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	1
Kingswood	1
Knowsley	1
Lancaster and Fleetwood	1
Leeds East	1
Leicester South	1
Leigh	1
Liverpool, Walton	1
Liverpool, Wavertree	2
Liverpool, West Derby	2
Manchester, Withington	1
Middlesbrough	2
Milton Keynes South	1
Newcastle upon Tyne Central	1
Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford	1
North Durham	1
North Somerset	1
North Swindon	1

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	NUMBER OF APPEALS
North Tyneside	1
North West Cambridgeshire	1
North West Durham	1
Nottingham East	3
Nottingham North	1
Nottingham South	1
Pendle	1
Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport	1
Preston	1
Rossendale and Darwen	1
Rushcliffe	1
Sedgefield	1
Sheffield Central	1
Sheffield South East	1
Sherwood	1
Southport	1
Stalybridge and Hyde	1
Stockton South	2
Stockton North	1
Tewkesbury	1
Tynemouth	1
Walsall South	1
Washington and Sunderland West	3
Wentworth and Dearne	1
West Lancashire	1
West Suffolk	1

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	NUMBER OF APPEALS
Winchester	1
Workington	3
Wales	
Aberavon	1
Cardiff South and Penarth	1
Cynon Valley	1
Llanelli	1
Newport West	1
Rhondda	2
Swansea East	1
Scotland	
Airdrie and Shotts	4
Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock	5
Central Ayrshire	5
Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill	3
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East	4
East Dunbartonshire	1
East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow	5
East Lothian	1
East Renfrewshire	3
Edinburgh North and Leith	1
Edinburgh South	1
Edinburgh West	1
Falkirk	4
Glasgow East	1
Glasgow North	1

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	NUMBER OF APPEALS
Glasgow North East	8
Glasgow North West	4
Glasgow South West	1
Glenrothes	1
Inverclyde	3
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	13
Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath	2
Lanark and Hamilton East	2
Linlithgow and East Falkirk	1
Livingston	1
Midlothian	1
Motherwell and Wishaw	3
North Ayrshire and Arran	2
Ochil and South Perthshire	1
Paisley and Renfrewshire North	11
Paisley and Renfrewshire South	4
Perth and North Perthshire	1
Rutherglen and Hamilton West	7
Stirling	3
West Dunbartonshire	5
Constituency not yet identified	
	8

■ **Green Deal Scheme: Compensation**

Mr Paul Sweeney:

[5084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps her Department has taken to compensate people who have been detrimentally affected by the Green Deal Scheme.

Mr Paul Sweeney:

[5085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what her Department's timescale is for processing appeals from people who claim to have been adversely affected by the Green Deal Scheme.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

There is a specific process for handling complaints under the Green Deal. This starts with a complaint by the consumer to their Green Deal Provider. If not resolved satisfactorily, the consumer may then approach the Green Deal Ombudsman or the Financial Ombudsman Service, depending on the nature of the complaint. Their decisions will be binding on the Green Deal Provider. If after progressing through those channels the consumer is still not satisfied, they may request that their complaint be referred to the Secretary of State for consideration.

In respect of such referrals, the Secretary of State may reduce or cancel a Green Deal loan, if she is satisfied that there has been a breach of the law or code of practice.

The cancellation or reduction of a loan represents the full extent of the Secretary of State's power to provide redress for consumers in relation to the Green Deal.

BEIS aims to ensure that cases are concluded as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring that fair redress is provided where appropriate and decisions take account of all available, relevant evidence.

BEIS currently has a number of outstanding appeal cases and we have taken steps to speed-up the handling process. We are making progress and this has resulted in the recent issuing of 4 final sanctions and 16 Intention Notices. We expect these numbers to increase significantly soon.

■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

Jessica Morden:

[3649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans she has to reduce electricity costs for the steel sector.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 October 2019]: We have taken steps to reduce the cumulative impact of energy and climate change policies on industrial electricity prices for the steel sector and other key energy intensive industries. This includes paying over £300m compensation to the steel sector since 2013.

We have a number of funds available, or in development, that will help energy intensive industries, including steel, to increase energy efficiency and transition to a low carbon future. These funds include the £315 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, the Industrial Heat Recovery Support Programme and the recently announced £250 million Clean Steel Fund.

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Ethnic Groups

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[6482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy what future plans she has to set targets to increase BAME representation on local enterprise partnership boards.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) must be accountable to their area and representative of the communities they serve. The 2018 Government Review – Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships – set out what LEPs should themselves do to improve the diversity of their Chairs and board members, in terms of protected characteristics, gender and also in drawing from a more diverse representation of sectors. Through the publication of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (2019) and LEP Annual Performance Reviews we will hold LEPs to account for achieving that.

■ Natural Gas: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[\[3766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what her Department's policy is on delivering investment in gas distribution network innovation in relation to heat and transportation decarbonisation in Scotland.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Gas distribution network Innovation is delivered through the RIIO price control. The energy regulator, Ofgem, provides essential backing to innovative projects which aim to help make the energy networks smarter, accelerate the development of a low carbon energy sector as well as deliver financial benefits to consumers. This is the case for all home nations within GB. Below are some examples of gas distribution network innovation:

Hydrogen 100 Project^[1]

The H100 project, led by SGN is a £2.8 million Ofgem funded project to design the world's first 100% hydrogen gas distribution network, demonstrating the safe, secure and reliable distribution of hydrogen. The project is assessing the suitability of three sites in Scotland, in Aberdeen, Levenmouth and Machrihanish with one to be selected as the most suitable location for the construction of the demonstration network.

Hydrogen fuelled buses ¹

Scotland are also supporting ways to meet low carbon transport using the gas network. Hydrogen could potentially power many of our larger vehicles – buses, lorries and ferries. The extensive trialling of hydrogen powered buses in Aberdeen shows the potential benefits of low carbon and reduced air pollution from public transport.

[1] A vision for Scotland's electricity and gas networks 2019-2030 report

■ Post Office: Bank Services**Caroline Nokes:**[\[4992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support is being provided to elderly or frail Barclays customers to withdraw cash once their ability to use the Post Office facility is withdrawn.

Kelly Tolhurst:

On 8th October 2019 the Post Office announced a new Banking Framework agreement with 28 UK banks to ensure that millions of their customers continue to have national, free access to everyday banking services. 27 high street banks signed up in full, but Barclays had uniquely opted out of cash withdrawal services. Whilst this was a commercial decision for Barclays to make, the Government remained concerned about the implications of their decision, especially for vulnerable customers.

We are pleased that on 25th October after significant encouragement for the bank to reconsider, Barclays announced their decision to reverse their initial decision to opt out of cash withdrawals under Banking Framework 2. This will ensure that all in the communities around the UK, in particular the elderly or frail have access to withdraw cash.

■ Post Offices: Bank Services**Emma Reynolds:**[\[5435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to oblige banks and building societies to sign an agreement with the Post Office to enable customers to withdraw money from their bank accounts at their local post office.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 30 October 2019]: The Government recognises the critical role that post offices play in communities and for small businesses across the UK. This is why the Government committed to safeguard the post office network and protect existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,600 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion since 2010.

On 8th October 2019 the Post Office announced a new Banking Framework agreement with 28 UK banks to ensure that millions of their customers continue to have national, free access to everyday banking services. Signing up to this framework was a commercial decision for each bank to make, as banks and building societies have a commercial right to decide. We are pleased that as of 25 October 2019 all 28 high street banks signed up in full. This will ensure that communities across the UK, in particular the elderly and vulnerable, have access to withdraw cash.

■ Social Enterprises

Bill Esterson: [\[5433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the findings of the global perception poll conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation that the UK has fallen from third to 13th place since 2016 in the list of the best places to be a social entrepreneur.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 30 October 2019]: The Government welcomes the contribution which social enterprises make to local growth and prosperity in our communities up and down the country. The UK's company law framework allows for a variety of business forms, in part to suit those adopting social or environmental purposes, and we will continue to look at what more can be done to support social entrepreneurship in the UK.

■ Thomas Cook: Insolvency

Ms Lisa Forbes: [\[3815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 1123, what financial support is available for businesses in a position to take on former employees of Thomas Cook.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 28 October 2019]: My rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State has convened a special cross-government taskforce alongside local stakeholders to support employees, local stakeholders and supply chains. The taskforce is considering support schemes available and will also monitor local business impacts.

Additionally, the Rapid Response Service is helping people find a new job as soon as possible by offering tailored support, which may include:

- Help with job searches, including CV writing and interview skills.
- Help to identify transferable skills and skills gaps, linked to the local labour market.
- Training to update skills, learn new ones and gain industry recognised certification that will improve employability.
- Help to overcome barriers to attending training, securing a job or self-employment, such as childcare costs, tools, work clothes and travel costs.

Local partners are able to advise on support available locally to former employees and businesses wishing to recruit them.

Ms Lisa Forbes: [\[3817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 737, how many of the (a) 7,186 and (b) 462

former Thomas Cook employees who specifically stated in their claim that Peterborough was their place of work have received redundancy payments to date.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 28 October 2019]: Three thousand of the 9,000 staff employed by Thomas Cook were retained after the commencement of the liquidation to assist repatriation work and the liquidation process. This included many at the HQ in Peterborough responsible for areas such as payroll.

As a result, a number of the Peterborough claims are from employees made redundant in the last week following the end of the repatriation exercise and are therefore currently still being assessed and processed for payment. Administering redundancy payments is an ongoing process as claims are verified and further payroll information is received. The Redundancy Payments Service will process outstanding payments as quickly as possible.

As of 29 October 2019, of the 7,627 former Thomas Cook employees who have submitted claims to the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service, 7,483 have received one or more payment. Of the 587 former Thomas Cook employees who specifically state in their claim that Peterborough was their place of work, 555 have received one or more payment.

■ **Unpaid Work: Pilot Schemes**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[6441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of Brighton and Hove City Council's public consultation on the scale of unpaid work trials; and if her Department will undertake a similar consultation at a national level.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is committed to ensuring that all employers pay their workers correctly. HM Revenue and Customs considers all worker complaints and will take enforcement action in any cases of abuse.

We have clarified through guidance that unpaid work trials are not permissible if they are excessive or not part of a genuine recruitment process. They can play an important role in helping people into work opportunities.

The Government will consider the results of Brighton and Hove City Council's public consultation once the consultation is concluded.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Brexit: Publicity**

Jon Trickett: [\[6206\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much has been spent from the public purse by each supplier on the Get Ready for Brexit campaign as of 28 October 2019.

Helen Hayes: [\[6461\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the amount spent from the public purse on the (a) Get Ready for Brexit campaign and (b) preparations for the UK leaving the EU without a deal since 19 October 2019.

Chloe Smith:

The cost of the public information campaign will be published monthly on a rolling basis, as part of routine government transparency arrangements.

Jon Trickett: [\[6207\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of members of the public his Department plans to inform through the Get Ready for Brexit campaign.

Chloe Smith:

“Get Ready for Brexit” is a public information campaign that provides the facts citizens and businesses need to know about the preparations they need to take to be ready for when the UK leaves the EU.

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

Jon Trickett: [\[6208\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Get Ready for Brexit campaign remains operational.

Chloe Smith:

The ‘Get Ready for Brexit’ campaign is being paused and reviewed following the EU’s agreement to a Brexit extension until 31 January.

Jon Trickett: [\[6209\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the business case for the Get Ready for Brexit campaign.

Chloe Smith:

There are no plans to publish the business case for the ‘Get Ready for Brexit’ campaign; as has been the usual practice of successive administrations regarding officials’ advice to Ministers.

Jon Trickett: [\[6210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many complaints have been made to the Advertising Standards Agency about the Get Ready for Brexit campaign.

Chloe Smith:

The “Get Ready for Brexit” campaign has not received any official notification of complaints from the Advertising Standards Agency in relation to its advertising.

Jon Trickett: [\[6211\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, in which (a) print, (b) broadcast and (c) digital media outlets advertising space has been purchased for the Get Ready for Brexit campaign.

Chloe Smith:

“Get Ready for Brexit” is a public information campaign that provides the facts citizens and businesses need to know about the steps they need to take to be ready for when the UK leaves the EU.

The campaign has used a broad range of advertising platforms across print (including national and regional newspapers), broadcast (including national and regional radio and TV stations) and digital media (including multiple social media platforms and news websites), in both the UK and other EU27 countries.

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

Christian Matheson: [\[6416\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2019 to Question 1712, in which EU countries his Department is running the Get Ready for Brexit campaign.

Chloe Smith:

“Get Ready for Brexit” campaign activity has taken place in all 27 EU countries to make sure citizens and businesses have the facts they need to know about the steps they need to take to be ready for when the UK leaves the EU.

■ Cabinet Office: Living Wage

Matthew Pennycook: [\[R\] \[6468\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2019 to Question 2834 on Cabinet Office: Living Wage, what the evidential basis is for the estimate that 46,000 civil servants earn below the Living Wage Foundation’s living wage or London living wage; and how many of those 46,000 civil servants were based in (a) London and (b) outside London.

Simon Hart:

Pay for civil servants below the senior civil service is delegated to individual departments to determine. The 46,000 civil servants that earn below the voluntary living wage rates is an estimate using a range of data sources, as not all the required information is held centrally. This includes the 2019 Civil Service Statistics data, estimates from individual departments, and estimates of contracted working hours in each department.

On this basis, as of 31 March 2019 the overall number of civil servants based in London earning below the London Living wage (£10.55) stood at approximately 1,500. The number based outside London and earning below the voluntary living wage outside London (£9.00), stood at approximately 44,000.

Detailed information on the Civil Service Statistics and its data collection can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2019>

■ Campaigns: Disinformation**Amber Rudd:****[6345]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to tackle online deep fakes in political campaigning.

Chloe Smith:

The Government recognises the potential challenges artificial intelligence and digitally manipulated content, including “deepfakes”, may pose. We are considering these issues carefully as part of cross-Whitehall efforts to tackle online manipulation.

The Cabinet Office is taking a cross-Government approach to the safeguarding of our electoral processes through the Defending Democracy programme, including in relation to online manipulation. The Government has announced a range of measures to safeguard UK elections, including commitments to launch a consultation on electoral integrity and implementing a digital imprints regime for online election material. More detail on both of these will be brought forward in the coming months.

The Online Harms White Paper set out the Government's plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish a new statutory duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator, to ensure companies have appropriate processes in place to deal with harmful content on their service, and keep their users safe.

Disinformation is one of the harms proposed to be in scope of the regulator.

■ Civil Servants and Ministerial Policy Advisers: Security**Nic Dakin:****[6352]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 30 September 2019 to Question 290323 on Civil Servants and Ministerial Policy Advisers, the Answer of 7 October 2019 to Question 291490 on Democracy: Subversion and pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 529 on Ministerial Policy Advisers, what assessment he has made of compliance by (a)

officials and (b) special advisers that (i) developed and (ii) recommended proposals on the unlawful prorogation of Parliament with National Security vetting requirements in relation to activities intended to undermine Parliamentary democracy by political means.

Oliver Dowden:

Over and above routine security practices in place for vetted individuals, no further assessment has been made. In relation to the decision to prorogue Parliament, at all times the Government acted in the good faith and belief that its approach was both lawful and constitutional.

With regards to security practices, it would be inappropriate to comment on the compliance of any individual as to their National Security Vetting outside of the proper channels for doing so; these being internal to the security vetting regime. All such channels are confidential in order to ensure the integrity of the process, and the privacy and confidentiality of the subject(s).

■ **Conservative Party-DUP Agreement**

Patrick Grady:

[\[2762\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the policy paper Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Conservative and Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, what plans the Government has to review the (a) aims and (b) principles of that agreement.

Oliver Dowden:

The 2017 Confidence and Supply Agreement, which was for the duration of this Parliament, has provided certainty and stability that the country needed as we embarked on Brexit and beyond.

The Conservative and Unionist Party has worked with the Democratic Unionist Party to govern in the national interest.

Parliament has now resolved to hold an early general election, which will bring this Parliament and the 2017 Agreement to a close.

■ **Early Years Ministerial Group on Family Support**

Norman Lamb:

[\[6263\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to publish the recommendations of the inter-ministerial group on early years family support.

Norman Lamb:

[\[6264\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking as a result of the recommendations of the inter-ministerial group on early years family support.

Norman Lamb:

[\[6265\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, where responsibility for the healthy emotional and social development of babies and young children sits within government.

Oliver Dowden:

The Cabinet Office previously led on the inter-ministerial group (IMG) on early years family support. The IMG has concluded its work and has now disbanded. The recommendations are presently with Secretaries of State for consideration of next steps. We will consider publication once their view is clearer. Given that the emotional and social development of babies and young children is a broad and complicated issue, the responsibility for the area sits across multiple departments including MHCLG, DfE, DHSC and DWP.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Afzal Khan:

[\[5111\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether an impact assessment was undertaken on the potential effect of voter ID requirements on minority and ethnic communities.

Chloe Smith:

This Government takes its Public Sector Equality Duty extremely seriously. In addition to the pilots, we have consulted, and will continue to consult with a broad range of charities and civil society organisations, to make sure that voter ID will work for everybody.

Based on the evaluations of the independent Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office there is no indication that the ID requirement negatively affected the intention to vote for any consistent specific demographic group across the pilot authorities.

Showing ID is something people of all backgrounds already do every day, for example to take out a library book, claim benefits or pick up a parcel from the post office. Proving who you are before you make a decision of huge importance at the ballot box should be no different. As was the case during the pilots, any voter who does not have an approved form of ID will be able to apply, free of charge, for a local electoral ID from their local authority.

Afzal Khan:

[\[5112\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many individuals are at risk of becoming disenfranchised as a result of voter ID requirements.

Chloe Smith:

Voter ID is part of a body of work this Government is delivering to strengthen the integrity of our electoral system and give the public confidence that our elections are secure and fit for the 21st century.

Both the pilots and the Northern Irish experience demonstrate that the requirement to provide ID before voting does not have an adverse effect on turnout or participation.

Any voter who does not have an approved form of ID will be able to apply, free of charge, for a local electoral ID from their local authority to ensure that everyone eligible to vote has the opportunity to.

■ Electoral Register

Grahame Morris:

[6343]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates the online register to vote service has been offline as a result of scheduled maintenance; and for how many hours it was offline on each of those days in October 2019.

Chloe Smith:

The Register to Vote website has undertaken two essential maintenance windows so far in October 2019. The service was offline from 8:30am to 10:30am on Friday 4th October and Friday 25th October. This maintenance is essential to ensure the service remains secure and fit for purpose.

We are always looking for improvements to the service including reducing the downtime required for maintenance work.

Grahame Morris:

[6344]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates the online register to vote service has been offline as a result of (a) non-scheduled maintenance and (b) non-maintenance issues; and for how many hours it was offline on each of those days in October 2019.

Chloe Smith:

The Register to Vote website has had no downtime so far in October 2019 as a result of non-scheduled maintenance or non-maintenance issues.

■ Electorate: Personation

Afzal Khan:

[5110]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have been found guilty of voter impersonation in the last 10 years.

Chloe Smith:

Data on any convictions for offences related to personation is not collected or held by the Cabinet Office. The Electoral Commission report on electoral fraud and hold more detailed information which can be found at this link:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/electoral-fraud-data/2018-electoral-fraud-data>

■ Government Departments: Consultants

Jon Trickett: [\[3544\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 427, how much money has been spent from the public purse on consultancy fees as recorded by the Cabinet Office Spend Analytic Database by each Department in the 2018-2019 financial year.

Simon Hart:

Cabinet Office publishes spend over £25,000 on a monthly basis as part of its transparency data routine publication which is accessible [here](#).

■ Government Departments: Digital Technology

Jon Trickett: [\[6212\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2019 to Question 1565, how many civil servants co-ordinate the work of the approximately 17,000 Digital, Data and Technology professionals employed across government and directly supporting delivery of the Digital Transformation Strategy.

Simon Hart:

50 FTE in GDS act as central support and coordination for developing the Digital, Data and Technology profession across government. However, each department has their own DDaT professionals who also support the delivery of the digital transformation agenda.

Jon Trickett: [\[6213\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2019 to Question 1565, how many of those 17,000 Digital, Data and Technology professionals are (a) directly employed civil servants and (b) contingent workers.

Simon Hart:

Of the 15,508 DDaT professionals we have validated, so far, as part of the recent DDaT workforce commission (July 2019), there are approximately 9,955 civil servants, 3,469 contingent workers and 2,084 professionals with an unreported resource type.

■ Immigration: Venezuela

Neil Coyle: [\[6393\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of Venezuelan nationals living in the UK in each year since 2015.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ6393 (1).pdf]

■ Office for Veterans' Affairs: Public Appointments

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4946\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the salary is of the Director of the Office of Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4947\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the criteria were for the appointment of the Director of the Office of Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4948\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the appointment of a Director of Veterans Affairs was an open competition.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[4949\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which official or officials in Government confirmed the appointment of David Richmond CBE to the role of Director of the Office of Veterans' Affairs.

Oliver Dowden:

The appointment of the Director of the Office for Veterans' Affairs was made in line with Civil Service recruitment practices.

The remuneration for the role has been set in line with the salary scale applicable for Senior Civil Service payband two.

The criteria for the role included: strong leadership skills; an ability to inspire confidence and work effectively with the charity sector, Ministers and senior officials; and, knowledge of veterans' affairs and of relevant stakeholders.

■ Voting Methods: Visual Impairment

Ms Lisa Forbes: [\[5114\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to ensure blind and partially-sighted people are guaranteed privacy when they cast votes at elections.

Chloe Smith:

All eligible voters should be able to cast their vote in secret and the Government through the Cabinet Office chaired Accessibility of Elections Working Group is working to make elections more accessible. This has included working in partnership with the RNIB and Electoral Commission to make improvements to training materials for polling station staff to provide better support to voters with sight loss.

The proposals announced as part of the package around the Queen's Speech, will bring forward legislative measures that respond to issues raised in the Government's response to the 2018 Call for Evidence on Access to Elections. This will include

increasing the range of support available to voters with sight loss in polling stations, with a dedicated sub-group of the Accessibility of Elections Group Working researching potential solutions. Disabled people including those who are blind and partially sighted will also benefit from an increased range of support that can be provided at the polling station (such as carers).

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Training

Jon Trickett: [\[6215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK armed forces are undertaking urban training exercises in preparation for the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Jon Trickett: [\[6216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which sites UK armed forces have used for urban training exercises in the last 12 months.

Mark Lancaster:

Defence has developed a prudent standby package of Defence personnel to support the civil authorities on a range of tasks if required. There are no plans to utilise military personnel for public order following Brexit and the Armed Forces have not undertaken urban training exercises in preparation for the UK leaving the EU without a deal. Defence routinely conducts training and exercising in a range of environments, including urban environments as part of its preparedness for overseas operations.

A list of the sites routinely used by the Armed Forces for training in urban environments is provided in the table below:

SITE

Salisbury Plain Training Area

Dartmoor Training Area

Lulworth Range Complex

Tregantle Training Area

East Kent Training Area

Hythe Ranges

Lydd Ranges

Longmoor

Bramley Training Area

SITE

Pirbright Ranges

Stanford Army Field Training Centre

Fingerincoe

Sennybridge Training Area

Swynnerton Training Area

Caerwent Training Area

Castlemartin Ranges

Leek Training Area

Nescliff Training Camp

Magilligan Training Centre & Ranges

Ballykinler Training Centre & Ranges

Garelochhead Training Centre

Catterick Training Area

Warcop

British Army Training Unit Suffield – Canada

British Army Training Unit Kenya

Sennylager Training Centre – Germany

■ EU Defence Policy

Mr Steve Baker:

[6356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to ensure that UK defence priorities are not subordinate to EU capability development priorities.

Mark Lancaster:

The UK continues to conduct its defence policy according to its own priorities and to assess EU capability development initiatives on that basis. For example, the UK decided not to join Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). The Government has said that it may wish to participate in some EU capability development projects as part of the future partnership, on a voluntary and case-by-case basis where of clear benefit to the UK. The Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration provide such options to cooperate.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[6357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on the UK's defence capability being subject to the EU's Coordinated Annual Review on Defence after the UK has left the EU.

Mark Lancaster:

The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) is a stocktake of EU Member State plans for defence spending and capability development. Non-EU countries do not participate. The UK will, however, continue to call for full coherence between CARD and NATO's Defence Planning Process to avoid unnecessary duplication and to address issues of common interest such as interoperability of military forces.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[6358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to ensure the UK does not enter into permanent binding commitments within the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation after the UK has left the EU.

Mark Lancaster:

The Government has made clear that EU defence initiatives should be: coherent with NATO requirements; available to NATO; and have the fullest participation of non-EU NATO Allies. Where these conditions are met, the UK can support the development of EU tools such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

The UK has not joined PESCO as an EU Member State, but has expressed an interest in participating in capability development projects as part of the future partnership, on a voluntary and case-by-case basis, where this is of clear benefit to the UK. PESCO-participating Member States continue to negotiate the terms on which third countries might take part in PESCO projects.

■ European Defence Fund

Mr Steve Baker: [\[6359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy for the UK not to participate in the European Defence Fund after the UK leaves the EU.

Mark Lancaster:

The UK/EU Political Declaration states that the UK and the EU will consider UK industry participation in European Defence Fund programmes in order to facilitate interoperability and to promote joint effectiveness of our armed forces.

■ Falkland Islands: Armed Forces

Jon Trickett: [\[7056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many troops have been recalled from the Falklands to assist with preparations for the UK leaving the EU without a deal in the last 12 months.

Mark Lancaster:

Within the last twelve months, no military personnel have been recalled from the Falklands to assist with preparations for a no-deal Brexit.

■ **NATO: Open Skies Treaty****Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[6180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what representations he has made to NATO on the importance of continued cooperation under the Open Skies Treaty.

Mark Lancaster:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has raised this with his US counterpart and senior Government officials have also done so with theirs. We have also discussed this with other NATO Allies. In our representations we have emphasised that we believe the Treaty remains a valuable Confidence and Security Building Measure which contributes to military transparency and reducing the risk of conflict.

■ **Turkey: Guided Weapons****Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[6177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with his NATO counterparts on the potential effect of Turkish missile systems on UK air operations against Daesh.

Mark Lancaster:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has spoken to NATO counterparts on various occasions about a range of topics, most recently at the NATO Defence Ministerial meeting on 24-25 October. The UK has repeatedly raised concerns at Ministerial and official level about the Turkish purchase of S-400 missiles.

Sir Nicholas Soames:[\[6178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with his (a) Turkish counterpart and (b) NATO counterparts on Turkey's acquisition of Russian anti-air missile systems.

Mark Lancaster:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has raised our concern about Turkey's acquisition of the Russian S-400 missile system with both our Turkish and wider NATO counterparts. Turkey is a valued NATO Ally, on the front line of some of the UK and the Alliance's most difficult security challenges. Defence equipment procurement decisions are for individual nations, but all NATO allies have committed to reducing their dependence on Russian-sourced military equipment.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband****Caroline Nokes:**[\[4990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what provisions are in place to reimburse communities which have had to self-fund superfast broadband schemes as a consequence of having been promised but not received connection by Openreach.

Caroline Nokes:[\[4991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what penalties are enforced by Government on Openreach when it fails to adequately connect communities to superfast broadband.

Matt Warman:

The Government does not have any powers to impose penalties on network providers like Openreach, should they decide against connecting premises to superfast broadband for commercial reasons.

If, however, a provider like Openreach has been contracted to rollout superfast broadband under the Government's Superfast Broadband programme, there will be a contract between that provider and the Local Authority responsible for running the programme in the local area. Normally, a decision not to connect a property, which was originally in scope for the programme, is one that would be taken jointly by the Local Authority in consultation with the provider. If, however, a provider arbitrarily decided not to connect a property, this would represent a breach of that contract and the Local Authority would be able to take action under that contract. In the most serious circumstances, this could result in termination.

The Government does not provide retrospective funding for communities that are self-funding superfast broadband in their local area. However, many communities are utilising the government's £67 million Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to contribute towards the cost of their project.

In addition, the Government continues to take action to improve the connectivity of those without access to superfast broadband. Our Superfast Broadband programme is continuing to connect premises to superfast broadband, following the target of 95% coverage being hit by the end of 2017, and expects to hit 97% coverage by March 2020. In addition, the Government has introduced the broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO). This will give everyone in the UK the right to request decent broadband providing download speeds of at least 10 megabits per second from a designated provider up to a reasonable cost threshold of £3,400 per premise.

Government is also funding the rollout of next generation gigabit broadband in less commercial areas of the country, including through the £200 million Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme, as well as the Gigabit Voucher Scheme. On 30 September, the Government announced a further £5 billion of new funding to subsidise the rollout

of gigabit capable broadband to premises in the least commercial 20% of the country, including those areas that currently do not have access to superfast broadband.

Tom Watson: [\[6289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2019 to Question 2799 on broadband, to what (a) proportion and (b) number of premises does the Government aim to deliver full fibre to the premise by 2025.

Tom Watson: [\[6290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2019 to Question 2799, what proportion of gigabit broadband connections will be delivered by (a) fibre to the premise and (b) other technologies.

Matt Warman:

As set out in the answer of 24 October 2019, the Government is determined to secure nationwide coverage of gigabit capable broadband as soon as possible through the deployment of full fibre broadband, upgraded gigabit networks and, potentially, other technologies such as 5G fixed wireless access. The Government has not set targets for the proportion, or number of premises to be covered by these different technologies, as we are focussed on the outcome of better broadband connectivity for consumers, and we wish to encourage innovation and increased network competition in this market.

■ Cultural Heritage: Access

Mr Jim Cunningham: [\[6187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure that children with special needs are able to enjoy and access all parts of heritage sites.

Helen Whately:

Historic England, Government's adviser on the historic environment, has published guidance on improving access to historic buildings for people with disabilities. The guidelines explain how to make a range of positive changes to historic places, while at the same time working within the wider principles of conservation.

Similarly, English Heritage is committed to enabling everyone to experience the historic places in its care. English Heritage offers free education visits at sites to a wide range of learners, including groups of children, young people or adults with special learning needs or disabilities. English Heritage operates a "carer gets in free" policy at all its properties.

■ Cultural Heritage: Disability

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[6188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to increase awareness among staff at heritage sites of invisible disabilities such as autism.

Helen Whately:

The heritage sector is working to increase awareness among staff at heritage sites of invisible disabilities such as autism. English Heritage is committed to enabling everyone to experience the historic places in its care. Their 'welcome all' approach highlights to staff and volunteers that disability is not always obvious and that a best practice approach to access must look at a wide range of special needs. For example, English Heritage is part of the dementia-friendly heritage network, has held touch-tours for partially sighted visitors, and is currently considering ways to introduce quiet times and spaces at some of its properties.

In the museums part of the heritage sector, there is increasing activity supporting children and adults with autism to access culture. A number of DCMS-sponsored museums run 'quiet openings' where families with children with autism can explore the museum in a relaxed and quiet environment. Kids in Museums, an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, has partnered with Autism in Museums to deliver training days for museums around the country.

■ Hacker House: Grants

Tom Watson:

[\[6291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department's review of the decision to award public funds to Hacker House will include whether the requirement for the allocation of funding to not exceed 50 per cent of the company's annual income was waived for any other Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund grant recipient.

Tom Watson:

[\[6292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department's review into the decision to award public funding to Hacker House will include how many UK-based employees her Department assessed Hacker House to have during the application process for grant funding under the Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund.

Tom Watson:

[\[6293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department's review of the decision to award public funding to Hacker House will include a random audit of that company to determine how the public money granted under the Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund has been spent.

Nicky Morgan:

I have written to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee to set out the findings of the independent review conducted by the Government Internal Audit Agency and I attach a copy of the letter for reference.

Attachments:

1. Final Report [DCMS CSIIIF Review - final report 301019.pdf]
2. Information [Voluntary Bulk Information Release - Hacker House Ltd (2).pdf]
3. Letter [Nicky Morgan to DCMS Select Ctte - Hacker House.pdf]

■ National Lottery: Finance**Paul Masterton:**[\[6495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the equity of the distribution of National Lottery funding throughout the UK.

Helen Whately:

Over the past 25 years, the National Lottery has awarded over 535,000 grants bringing widespread benefits to communities across the United Kingdom.

National Lottery good cause money is allocated by distributing bodies at arm's length from Government in the proportions set out in the National Lottery etc Act 1993. Four distributors operate across the UK (National Lottery Community Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund, UK Sport and British Film Institute) and the remainder (Sport England, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Sport Scotland, Arts Council Wales, Sport Wales, Arts Council Northern Ireland and Sport Council Northern Ireland) distribute funding in their respective countries.

When making funding decisions geographical balance is considered by all distributors, alongside where funding will have the most impact in terms of outcomes and benefits. 70% of National Lottery funding has been awarded to projects outside of London and the South East.

Funding levels for areas are often determined by how many applications are submitted. Distributors are aware of some areas being more active in applying than others and actively run specific programmes to encourage applications from less funded areas.

■ Railways: Stockton and Darlington**Helen Goodman:**[\[6295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what preparations her Department are undertaking to celebrate the opening of the first public railway in Stockton and Darlington in 1825.

Helen Whately:

Through the Heritage Action Zone initiative, Historic England, Government's adviser on the historic environment, is helping to breathe new life into old places that are rich in heritage and full of promise. The Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) has been established to help rejuvenate and restore the historic railway and to help realise its potential to become a major heritage attraction in the build-up to its 2025 bicentenary. The aim is to provide the impetus for long term economic growth and regeneration in the area.

The preparations for celebrating the bicentenary are central to the HAZ. The HAZ is part of a much wider initiative around celebrating the anniversary, led by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), and there are extensive plans in place to mark the anniversary. A lot of well-developed planning on the S&DR HAZ has taken place involving all the key partners including local government partners as well as industry partners, such as National Rail and others. The partners are working together not just on the overall management of the project, but also on the planning of a highly ambitious cultural programme for 2025. Extensive groundwork has taken place to develop the corridor of the S&DR HAZ into a coherent attraction with all key partners working on plans to celebrate 2025 as the anniversary of a great moment in our shared history. The partners' intention is to create a permanently enhanced cultural attraction across the S&DR HAZ area in order to leave a lasting legacy.

The National Railway Museum, part of the DCMS-Sponsored Science Museum Group, will also be celebrating this monumental anniversary. The Railway Museum in York and its sister site, Locomotion in Shildon, are being transformed in order to reimagine the way they share the inspirational story of Britain's railways with future generations, and visitors from around the world. These redevelopments, supported by £18.6m of government funding, will culminate in significant celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025.

EDUCATION**■ Academies: Pay****Mr Jim Cunningham:****[6189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the salaries of executives of academy schools earning more than £150,000 a year.

Nick Gibb:

Academy trusts must exercise effective control over the use of public funding. That is why the Department has taken sustained action over the last two years to ensure executive pay is proportionate and justifiable.

Academy trusts are free to set their own salaries. Therefore, our challenge, and the consideration of the justification of any high executive salaries, takes into account

factors including: educational performance, financial performance, the strength of the trust's governance and the number of pupils being educated by the trust.

To date, the Department has challenged 278 academy trusts, both those paying a salary over £150,000 and those paying two or more over £100,000. The names of all these trusts are available on GOV.UK, along with guidance on the setting of executive pay. Since the Department commenced the challenge, 51 trusts have reduced salaries.

Most recently, the Department has strengthened the criteria for next year's Condition Improvement Fund, which will incentivise academies and trusts to improve finances and governance. Bids will be assessed on a points based criteria and applicants outside of London will get a four-point deduction (a one-point deduction for trusts and academies in the greater London area) if they pay one salary over £150,000 or two or more salaries in excess of £100,000 and have failed to take appropriate action in response to our high pay challenge.

■ Apprentices and Vocational Education

Ian Lavery:

[4320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to promote (a) vocational qualifications and (b) apprenticeships to students and young people.

Michelle Donelan:

We are introducing T levels, a high-quality technical alternative to A levels to help young people get the high-wage, high-skill jobs of the future. With longer teaching hours, higher standards and a meaningful industry placement, T levels will be more rigorous and occupationally relevant than many current vocational courses.

Alongside the introduction of T levels, we are reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below. The aim is to ensure that qualifications are necessary, have a distinct purpose, are high-quality and support progression.

Apprenticeships are a high-quality alternative path to a career for people of all ages and we are improving the quality of apprenticeships through making them longer, better, with more off-the job training and proper assessment at the end.

We have established 4 National Colleges, which are leading the way in the design and delivery of higher technical skills training, ensuring that industries and sectors which are critical to our national economic growth, have the skills they need.

We are investing up to £290 million of capital funding to enable every region in England to establish a high quality Institute of Technology. With state-of-the-art equipment and facilities, and employers in the driving seat, they will give businesses the skilled workforce they need to drive growth and productivity and get more people into rewarding jobs.

It is important that students and young people have access to high-quality information and advice about their choices, including technical options and apprenticeships.

In 2017 we introduced a new Careers Strategy, setting out a long-term plan to build a world class careers system that will help young people and adults choose the career that's right for them. An important element of the strategy is the responsibility that schools and colleges must provide their students with a full picture of their options. This includes a new law introduced in January 2018, under which schools must allow technical education and apprenticeship providers into their schools to talk to pupils about their offer.

We have also undertaken a range of activities to make students and young people aware of the benefits an apprenticeship can offer. Our apprenticeships campaign, Fire It Up, is working to promote apprenticeships to young people, demonstrating that they are an aspirational choice for anyone with passion and energy.

We are also working with schools to promote apprenticeships to students. We have developed Amazing Apprenticeships, a website and resource portal for schools and teachers. In addition, we offer a free service to schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) project to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and support to enable them to promote apprenticeships to their students. Last academic year the ASK programme reached over 300,000 students across 2,368 establishments and from September 2019 it has been extended to include years 7 to 9.

■ Apprentices: Shipping

Gordon Marsden: [6226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprentice (a) starts and (b) completions there have been in each sector of the maritime industry since 2014-15.

Gordon Marsden: [6228]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which training providers offer apprenticeships for employers in the maritime industry.

Gordon Marsden: [6229]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average age is of an apprentice in the maritime industry sector.

Michelle Donelan:

Data on apprenticeship starts, completions, training providers and age of apprentices is not available for the maritime industry sector specifically.

Due to the methodology behind these experimental statistics, data has not been published below the broad industry sector level.

The most recent statistics on apprenticeships starts by broad industry sector cover the academic years 2012/13 to 2016/17 and are published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-in-england-by-industry-characteristics>.

Gordon Marsden:

[6227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average length of time is for agreeing standards for apprenticeships in the maritime industry through the Trailblazer working group model.

Michelle Donelan:

This is a matter for the Institute for Apprenticeships. I have asked its Chief Executive, Sir Gerry Berragan, to write to the hon. Member, and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses when it is available.

■ Apprentices: Taxation

Mr Edward Vaizey:

[R] [4963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that employers in the screen industry use more of the apprenticeship levy funding they receive.

Michelle Donelan:

We are working closely with the screen industry so that it can benefit from apprenticeships.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education are working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to support the development of apprenticeship standards. Currently there are 48 approved standards available for delivery in the creative and digital sectors.

From discussions with the screen sector, we recognise that it faces some challenges in spending available levy funds due to the dominance of project-based working in the sector. To overcome these challenges, we are working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and ScreenSkills on an innovative Film and TV Apprenticeships pilot which will enable around 20 apprentices to benefit from hands-on experience on the sets of major films and TV shows. Launching in 2020, it will explore a new model for how high-quality apprenticeships can be used to deliver multiple placements on film and TV productions, as well as addressing skills shortages.

In addition, we have increased the transfer cap from 10% to 25% enabling levy-paying employers to transfer funds to smaller employers or charities in order to support the development of skills in their supply chains or respond to skills shortages in their sectors.

■ Care Leavers: Supported Housing

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[4430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to local authorities on recruitment of supported lodgings carers for 16 and 17 year-olds in care.

Michelle Donelan:

Guidance on supported lodgings is outlined in the Children Act (1989) guidance and regulations.

The term 'supported lodgings' has no formal definition or prescribed regulatory framework, but supported lodgings services generally share key common characteristics. They provide accommodation for a young person within a family home, where the young person will have a degree of independence with their own room and will share the kitchen and bathroom facilities with the "host" (hosts can be families, couples or single people).

The primary aim of supported lodgings is to provide a supported household environment that enables a young person to develop practical, emotional and relationship skills that will ensure they make a successful transition from care to independence and adulthood. Supported lodgings should be seen as part of a range of accommodation options on offer to young people aimed at preparing them for independence and adulthood. As commissioners or providers of supported lodgings, local authorities should ensure that clear policies and procedures are in place, setting out the following:

- assessment and approval criteria for carer/s or host/s;
- the nature and level of support for carer/s or host/s;
- allowance and fee structure;
- referral and matching criteria for young people to carer/s or host/s;
- expectations of carer/s or host/s and young people;
- safeguarding frameworks;
- financial arrangements (young people aged 16 and 17 and young people aged 18 and over);
- training available to carer/s or host/s;
- the income tax, national insurance and welfare benefits frameworks affecting payments made to carer/s or hosts.

■ Children: Behaviour Disorders**Paul Farrelly:**[\[6251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the trend in the level of use of medication to treat behavioural issues in young children.

Paul Farrelly:[\[6252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the guidance his Department issues to schools on the use of medication prescribed to children to treat behavioural issues.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally, on the number of pupils who use medication to treat behavioural issues.

The Government is committed to pupils with medical conditions being properly supported at school so that they have full access to education.

In 2014, the Government introduced a new duty on schools to support pupils with all medical conditions and has published statutory guidance on this for schools and others. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

The guidance does not specify which medical conditions should be supported in schools. Instead, it focuses on how to meet the needs of each individual child and how their medical condition impacts on school life.

In June 2014, the Department issued non-statutory advice on mental health and behaviour to help schools identify underlying mental health problems in young people, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>.

The advice clarifies the responsibility of the school, outlines what they can do and how to support a child or young person whose behaviour may be related to an unmet mental health need.

■ Children: Day Care**Stephen McPartland:****[6367]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of extending 30 hours' free childcare to 52 weeks a year.

Nick Gibb:

All the free early education and childcare entitlements can be 'stretched' by taking fewer hours per week over up to 52 weeks of the year to cover term-time and the school holidays, for example 23 hours for 48 weeks of the year, and free places can be delivered at weekends.

No estimate has been made of the cost of 30 hours' free childcare for 52 weeks of the year.

Helen Hayes:**[6463]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of current hourly rates for free and subsidised childcare; and what plans his Department has to review current funding levels.

Nick Gibb:

The Government wants to support early years providers in delivering high quality care and education, which is why my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

recently announced funding to increase hourly rates for the Government's free hours offers for 2020-21.

In total, the Department plans to spend over £3.6 billion on early education entitlements next year.

The Government recognises the need to keep the evidence base on costs up to date. We continue to monitor the nurseries and childcare market closely through a range of regular and one-off research projects which provide insight into various aspects of the market. That includes the 2018 Early Years Provider Costs report which looked at a representative sample of nurseries and childminders. This is available here:

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

Helen Hayes:

[6464]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on the operation of childcare providers and nurseries of the increase in free childcare to 30 hours per week; and what plans he has to increase funding to ensure that the current level of provision is maintained.

Nick Gibb:

Although childcare providers do not have to offer the 30 hours entitlement, our 2018 Provider Survey shows that the majority of nurseries and childcare providers who take three and four-year-olds are offering 30 hours places.

Nearly 36,000 nurseries and childcare providers delivered 30 hours places in the second year of the programme. Around 600,000 children have benefitted from a 30 hours place in the first two years of delivery. Nurseries and childcare providers can choose whether to offer the entitlements and can then do so in ways which meet the needs of their business, within the confines of the statutory guidance.

As part of the Department's commitment to support early years providers in delivering high quality care and education, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, recently announced funding to increase hourly rates for the Government's free hours offers for 2020-21. In total, the Department plans to spend over £3.6 billion on our early education entitlements next year.

■ Curriculum: Renewable Energy and Environment Protection

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[5080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the national curriculum includes the knowledge and skills needed for work in (a) the renewable energy sector and (b) green technology.

Nick Gibb:

The National Curriculum aims to prepare pupils with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a wide range of careers. This includes preparing students for further study in engineering and technology which supports careers in sectors such as green technology and renewable energy.

The primary science curriculum lays the foundation for the understanding of energy and mechanics through topics such as light, electricity and forces. This is built upon during Key Stage 3 and 4 physics which includes substantial teaching on topics including energy, electricity, forces and motion. This will be supported by the study of Mathematics. Students may also choose to study GCSEs in design and technology or engineering which teach students to understand technical and engineering processes respectively.

The National Curriculum also teaches pupils about topics such as climate change, use of natural resources and the impact of human actions on the environment in the science and geography programmes of study. This includes study of renewable and non-renewable energy sources in Key Stage 4 physics and the efficacy of recycling in Key Stage 3 chemistry. In 2017, the Department introduced a new environmental science A-Level. This enables students to study topics that will support their understanding of energy resources, including the impact of technology on developing sustainable sources of energy.

In addition, T-Levels are being introduced as part of the Government's commitment to reforming technical education, supporting future skills needs across the economy. In setting T-Level content, employers must consider the inclusion of knowledge and understanding of sustainability as relevant to their sector. For example, in construction, T-Level students will be required to learn about renewable energy and emerging technologies to support energy efficiency.

■ Further Education: Per Capita Costs

Dan Jarvis: [\[6385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average level of per pupil funding is for (a) 16 and 17-year-olds and (b) 18-year-olds undertaking (i) academic and (ii) vocational courses.

Dan Jarvis: [\[6386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average level of per pupil funding is for (a) T-levels and (b) other vocational courses.

Michelle Donelan:

The government announced on 31 August 2019 that it will invest an extra £400 million in 16-19 education in 2020-21, which will increase funding per student for all provider types. This is the largest injection of 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 16-19 funding will increase by 4.7% in academic year 2020-21, from £4,000 to £4,188. This extra funding will support both vocational and academic courses.

Overall, the average rate of programme funding per 16-19 student in the 2019-20 academic year is £4507, which includes additional funding provided on top of the base rate through the 16-19 funding formula. This additional funding covers, for example, the needs of disadvantaged students. A 4.7% increase in that level would take average funding in 2020-21 to just over £4,700 per year.

Funding rates are based on a combination of values and factors relating to students and their learning programmes, and are calculated based on summary data at institution level. As a result, it is not possible to identify a specific figure for the funding per student for different types of provision. The different rates that apply for each element of the formula are set out in the Education and Skills Funding Agency's funding rates and formula guidance, which is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809266/Funding_rates_and_formula_201920_v2.pdf.

T Levels will not be delivered until September 2020 and therefore we do not yet know what the average level of funding per student will be. T Levels will attract more funding than other programmes, reflecting the fact that they require additional time to deliver them.

As with other 16-19 courses, we have now announced that T Levels funding rates will also be increased by 4.7% in 2020-21 and we have published details of the new T Level funding bands at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-allocations>.

■ Literacy

Mr Jeremy Hunt:

[6321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of adults in the UK who were (a) below OECD literacy Level 1, (b) at OECD literacy level 1 and (c) at OECD literacy level 2 in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education monitors literacy levels for adults through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Survey of Adult Skills. The last study took place in 2012 and showed the following:

Percentage of adults (aged 16-65) at each level in literacy in England, 2012

OECD LEVEL	PERCENTAGE MEETING THIS LEVEL IN LITERACY
Below Level 1	3.3%
Level 1	13.1%
Level 2	33.1%

Source: Table 2.7, Adult skills international survey 2012

The survey is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-survey-of-adult-skills-2012>.

The next OECD Survey of Adult Skills will take place in 2021/22.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance**Helen Hayes:** [\[6462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the cost to the public purse has been of free and subsidised nursery places in (a) London and (b) England in each year since 2015.

Nick Gibb:

The attached table shows the annual funding for the early education entitlements for England and London since 2015-16. This includes funding to all nurseries and childminders providing the 15 hour entitlement for disadvantaged 2 year olds, the universal 15 hours for all 3-4 year olds, and the additional 15 hour entitlement for 3-4 year olds of working parents. It also includes early years pupil premium funding, disability access funding, and supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools. Further breakdowns can be found by following the links provided in the table.

Attachments:

1. 6462_table [6462_Early_Years_Funding_Table.xls]

Helen Hayes: [\[6465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the 25 October 2019 decision of the Information Commissioner, if he will publish his Department's calculations of funding for free and subsidised nursery places.

Nick Gibb:

The Department wants every child to have the best start in life, which is why we are spending around £3.5 billion on early education entitlements this year and plan to spend over £3.6 billion on these entitlements next year.

The Department are aware of the decision made by the Information Commissioner's Office and are considering its response.

■ Pupils: Literacy**Mr Jeremy Hunt:** [\[6318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of pupils in England aged (a) 11 (b) 16 and (c) 18 did not have Entry Level 3 levels of literacy in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr Jeremy Hunt: [\[6319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of secondary school leavers in England who did not have Entry Level 3 levels of literacy in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not hold centrally information on how many and what proportion of pupils in England aged 11, 16 and 18 do not have entry Level 3 levels of literacy nor the information on the number of secondary school leavers in England who do not have Level 3 levels of literacy.

■ Schools: Discipline

Paul Farrelly: [6248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to limit the use of isolation booths in schools.

Paul Farrelly: [6249]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to collect information on the use of isolation booths by schools.

Paul Farrelly: [6250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of the use of isolation booths in schools in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy which outlines measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. The school's behaviour policy should set out the behaviour expected of pupils, the sanctions that will be imposed for misbehaviour, and rewards for good behaviour. This should be communicated to all pupils, school staff, and parents.

To help schools develop effective strategies, the Department has produced advice for schools which covers what should be included in the behaviour policy. This advice can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-and-discipline-in-schools>.

Existing guidance makes clear that schools can adopt a policy which allows disruptive pupils to be placed in isolation away from other pupils for a limited period. If a school uses isolation rooms as a disciplinary penalty, this should be made clear in their behaviour policy. As with other disciplinary penalties, schools must act lawfully, reasonably and proportionately in all cases. The school must also ensure the health and safety of pupils.

It is for individual schools to decide how long a particular pupil should be kept in isolation and for the staff member in charge to determine what pupils may and may not do during the time they are there. Schools should ensure that pupils are kept in isolation no longer than is necessary and their time spent there is used as constructively as possible. Schools must allow pupils time to eat or use the toilet.

The Department has made no recent assessment of trends in the level of the use of isolation booths in schools, and has no plans to collect national data on their use.

■ Schools: Sexual Offences

Stella Creasy: [6362]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what records his Department holds on sexual offences in schools.

Stella Creasy:

[6363]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue guidance for schools on managing convicted perpetrators of peer-to-peer sexual offences in schools.

Michelle Donelan:

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' is the Department's statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and is kept under review. It sets out that all safeguarding concerns, discussions and decisions made should be recorded in writing by the school, and where appropriate, referred to children's social care and or the police. The Department does not hold records on sexual offences in schools.

The guidance sets out how to deal with allegations that a pupil has been abused by a teacher, other member of staff or peer. It provides detailed guidance on how to manage reports of peer on peer sexual violence or sexual harassment, including those that result in a criminal conviction.

This guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>, where parts 1, 4 and 5 refer to safeguarding, child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment issues.

■ Sex and Relationship Education: Finance

Caroline Lucas:

[4978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2019 to Question 235, on Sex and Relationship Education: Finance, how much funding he plans to allocate to a programme of support for schools to teach (a) relationships education in primary schools, (b) relationships and sex education in secondary schools, and (c) health education in state-funded schools in 2020-21.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to investing in a programme of support for schools to deliver high quality teaching of Relationship and Health Education in primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education in secondary schools. The Department's internal budgets for 2020-21, including supporting the implementation of the new subjects, have not yet been set and this will be confirmed later in the autumn.

Further to the programme of support for the new subjects, schools are free to choose how they spend their funding to support their pupils. Overall, school funding is increasing by 5% in 2020-21. The Department is committed to ensuring that per-pupil funding for every school can rise at least in line with inflation next year and faster than inflation for most.

This is part of the Government's investment of a total of £14 billion additional funding for schools over the next three years – the largest cash boost in over a decade – which will allow for a cash increase of £2.6 billion next year, with increases of £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to 2019-20.

The Department is committed to delivering the greatest gains to areas which have been historically underfunded, removing the previous cap on gains so that funding flows through in full. At the same time, we are levelling up the lowest funded schools to ensure they have the right investment to deliver an outstanding education. Every secondary school will receive at least £5,000 per pupil, and every primary school at least £3,750 next year – putting primary schools on the path to receiving at least £4,000 per pupil the following year.

The Department trusts schools and head teachers to spend their budgets in a way that achieves the best outcomes for their pupils, including how best to support the teaching of the curriculum.

■ Sign Language: Education

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[6496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the cost of learning British Sign Language on take-up of those courses among parents of deaf children.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[6497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the availability of publicly funded British Sign Language courses for parents of deaf children.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[6498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing funding through the adult education budget to parents of deaf children to learn British Sign Language.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises that early access to language is essential to help children to learn and to thrive and it is vital that parents and carers are supported to communicate with the deaf and hearing-impaired children and young people that they care for.

The government currently provides funding for adult learners aged 19 and over to undertake British Sign Language (BSL) qualifications through the Adult Education Budget, up to and including level 2. BSL forms part of the local flexibility offer (non-statutory) and qualifications are either fully funded (if the learner is unemployed or participating in the low wage trial) or co-funded depending on the age, prior achievement and employment status of the learner. BSL qualifications at level 3 and above can be funded through an Advanced Learner Loan.

In addition, the government has funded the development of a family sign language programme, through the I-sign programme, which is freely available at the National Deaf Children's Society family sign language website, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/language-and-communication/sign-language/family-sign-language/>.

The Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014) requires local authorities to assess whether a parent carer within their area has need for social care support and, if so, what those needs are.

In relation to the assessment of the cost of learning British Sign Language on take-up of those courses among parents of deaf children, I refer the hon. Member to the answer the former Minister for Children and Families (Kemi Badenoch), my hon. Friend for Saffron Walden gave on 2 August 2019 to Question [280364](#).

■ Students: Loans

Chris Ruane: [\[4940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of extending student loan eligibility to people in prison who have more than six years to run on their sentence.

Chris Skidmore:

Prisoners set to be released within 6 years have been eligible for tuition fee loans with the consent of the prison authorities. There are no plans to change this policy.

Mr Jeremy Hunt: [\[6320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the total interest paid on student loans was in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Chris Skidmore:

The Student Loans Company does not distinguish between capital and interest when allocating repayments to a student's account. It is not possible therefore to identify separately the total interest repaid.

■ UTC Warrington

Helen Jones: [\[6220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial viability of UTC Warrington; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Education Skills and Funding Agency are currently in discussions with UTC Warrington about their plans for financial recovery. It would not be appropriate to make a statement at this time.

Helen Jones: [\[6221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with representatives of (a) Warrington Borough Council and (b) hon. Members representing Warrington on UTC Warrington in advance of a decision being made on the future of that college.

Nick Gibb:

As for all academy trusts, any decision on the future of UTC Warrington would be subject to the Department's standard protocols, which includes engaging with key stakeholders and other interested parties.

Helen Jones:**[6222]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils are currently on the roll at UTC Warrington.

Nick Gibb:

The most recent figures for pupils on roll are from the school census for January 2019 which was published in June 2019. There were 258 pupils on roll at UTC Warrington at that time. Figures relating to January 2020 will be published in June 2020.

Further information can be found in the annual 'School, pupils and their characteristics' statistical release at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>.

Information can also be found on the 'Get Information About Schools' web page, which can be found at:

<https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Establishment/Details/142899>.

Helen Jones:**[6223]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) capital and (b) revenue expenditure has been spent on UTC Warrington since its inception.

Nick Gibb:

The system for approving new free schools is underpinned by a rigorous application and evaluation process. Each application is considered against published criteria, focusing on the capacity and track record of proposers, with extensive due diligence and financial viability checks carried out on the applicant and affordability and value for money checks on the application and business case.

The Department is working with the contractor to finalise capital costs for UTC Warrington. The Department publishes capital costs for all free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools on GOV.UK once all works are completed and costs are finalised.

Given that these can be large and complex projects, this can take some time between first opening and publication. Additional finalised capital costs for individual free schools, UTCs and studio schools will be published in due course.

UTCs receive funding based on their local authority formulae, so are funded in the same way as their academy and maintained school counterparts in Warrington. The revenue funding received in each academic year by UTC Warrington is as follows:

2016-17	£1,705,675
2017-18	£2,451,962
2018-19	£1,172,500
2019-20 (up to and including November 2019)	£548,672
Total	£5,878,810

In pre-opening, the Department gives free school projects and UTCs Project Development Grant (PDG) to cover essential non-capital costs up to the point at which the school opens.

The PDG rates that projects receive are determined by the type of school being opened. Once open, free schools and UTCs are funded on the same basis as other academies and maintained schools, although, as they grow, free schools and UTCs delivered through the government's central route also receive Post Opening Grant (POG). POG is given to reflect the additional costs in establishing a new publicly funded school which cannot be met through the General Annual Grant.

PDG and POG costs are published once free schools and UTCs are open, and POG costs are updated annually and can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-spending-on-free-schools-and-studio-schools>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-spending-on-university-technical-colleges>.

Helen Jones:

[6224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) qualified teachers, (b) support staff and (c) other staff are employed by UTC Warrington.

Nick Gibb:

The number of qualified teachers, teaching assistants, other educational support staff and auxiliary staff in UTC Warrington in November 2018 is provided in the attached table.

The information provided is published in the 'School Workforce in England, November 2018' publication, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2018>.

Attachments:

1. 6224_table [6224.UTC.Warrington.Staff .pdf]

■ Weald of Kent School

Lucy Powell: [\[6391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on how many occasions and for how long the (a) headteacher and (b) other members of the Senior Leadership team based at the original school site at the Weald of Kent grammar school have visited the annex site in Sevenoaks.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally. The Department does not hold operational information at this level. However, given the uniqueness of this particular case, the Department has assured itself that the Weald of Kent does indeed continue to operate as one school across two sites.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Agriculture: Northern Ireland**

David Simpson: [\[3614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his policy that payments to farmers in Northern Ireland will be comparable to Common Agricultural Policy payments after 2022.

George Eustice:

Following the Bew Review, the Government has confirmed that it will not simply apply the Barnett formula to changes in Defra funding beyond this Parliament and has committed to developing an approach on future (i.e. after 2022) funding allocations, recognising that agriculture policy is and will remain devolved. Longer term discussions between the Government and the devolved administrations will be about ensuring allocations are fair and that no farmers in any part of the UK gain an unfair competitive advantage.

■ Animal Products: Imports

Mrs Pauline Latham: [\[575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether imports of trophy hunting can arrive in the UK via other countries to those in which the trophies originated.

Zac Goldsmith:

Hunting trophies are generally imported directly from the source country. However, there are occasions when hunting trophies are exported via another country. An example would be when specialist taxidermy services may not be available in the source country where the trophy was hunted.

Imports from countries which are not the source country of the hunting trophy remain subject to the same requirements to secure a permit under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations, which are directly applicable in the UK and will become Retained EU

Law in the UK after we leave the EU. All applications for permits to import hunting trophies into the UK are assessed to make sure that the import would not have a harmful effect on the conservation status of the species or on the extent of the territory occupied by the relevant population of the species. Import suspensions are in place for countries where hunting of certain species is considered unsustainable.

■ **Beverage Containers: Recycling**

Sandy Martin: [3808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the impact assessment entitled, Introducing a deposit return scheme on beverage containers, included an assessment of the changes proposed to the waste regime which were included in the strategy entitled Our waste, our resources: a strategy for England published on 18 December 2018.

Rebecca Pow:

We recognise that any potential deposit return scheme would need to work alongside the wider producer responsibility and recycling systems in operation in this country (including any potential changes to them). We have carefully considered the connections between these policy areas and chose to launch the three sets of consultations and impact assessments together to reflect this.

■ **Domestic Waste: Waste Disposal**

Douglas Chapman: [3718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking with the devolved Administrations to provide for a consistent household recycling and waste collection process throughout the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Environment policy is devolved. However, Northern Ireland wants similar arrangements to England which is why it has clauses in the Environment Bill which was introduced in Parliament on 15 October
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2019-2020/0003/20003.pdf>.

The measures in the Bill mean that all the UK nations will have similar requirements for the collection of recycling materials.

This will help the UK as a whole move to higher levels of recycling and less waste to landfill.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ **Business: North West**

Christian Matheson: [6415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, how many meetings on the UK leaving the EU his Department has had with businesses with supply chains

connected to the EU in (a) Chester and (b) the North West to help prepare those businesses for the UK leaving the EU.

James Duddridge:

Since July 2016, the Department for Exiting the European Union has organised over 850 recorded engagements with business and civil society stakeholders from every sector and major region of the UK economy. DExEU Ministers have attended over 120 roundtable meetings on preparedness and a wide range of other EU exit topics, and have met national business and sectoral organisations that represent the key industries of the North West's economy.

Ministers continue to conduct an extensive programme of visits across the UK to engage with business and civil society stakeholders on EU exit. Ministers have visited Chambers of Commerce across the North West, and organisations with supply chains closely connected to the European Union.

■ **UK Trade with EU**

Jeff Smith:

[\[3727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of the provisions in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill for Parliament to scrutinise the UK-EU free trade agreement negotiations.

James Duddridge:

The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, introduced on 21 October included a clause intended to give Parliament a crucial role in shaping and agreeing the UK's future relationship with the European Union. This clause would require:

- that Parliament signs off of the final objectives for the negotiations, before negotiations EU-UK can begin.
- that Parliament sign off on the final deal, once political agreement has been reached.
- that the Government formally reports on progress of negotiations against the objectives set by Parliament every three months.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Bahrain: Foreign Relations**

Stephen Gethins:

[\[4376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of diplomatic relations between UK and Bahrain.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK and Bahrain continue to have a close and important relationship, which has flourished for more than 200 years. We cooperate on a number of pillars: defence;

security; trade and investment. We work together on shared concerns about regional issues and the UK continues to provide technical assistance to Bahrain's ongoing reform agenda.

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Stephen Gethins:

[\[4377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) human rights issues and (b) human rights abuse cases the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa raised with his Bahraini counterpart at the UK-Bahrain Joint Working Group on 17 October 2019.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We regularly discuss human rights and reform with the Government of Bahrain, including at the biannual UK-Bahrain Joint Working Group. We welcome the progress made by Bahrain on their reform programme, including the introduction of the new legislation on alternatives to punishment and new proposed legislation on juvenile justice. Bahrain remains a Foreign and Commonwealth Office human rights priority country and the British Government continues to encourage the Government of Bahrain to meet its human rights obligations, in both public and private conversations.

■ Chile: Demonstrations

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[6434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of allegations of human rights abuses during the ongoing protests in Chile.

Christopher Pincher:

The British Government is concerned by events that have occurred in Chile in recent days, and is aware of allegations of human rights abuses by a few members of the security forces. We welcome that the Chilean Government has responded to these allegations by giving access to human rights investigators and inviting the UN Human Rights Commissioner and Human Rights Watch to send investigatory teams. We welcome the clear statements made by the Chilean authorities that allegations of human rights abuses will be investigated and that, if appropriate, prosecutions will follow.

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[6435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chilean counterpart on the number of minors arrested during the ongoing protests in Chile.

Christopher Pincher:

The British Government is concerned by events that have occurred in Chile in recent days, including reports of the arrest of minors by security forces. We welcome that the Chilean Government has invited the UN Human Rights Commissioner and Human Rights Watch to send investigatory teams, and that the Justice Minister and

public prosecutors have made clear that members of the security forces will not be immune from any investigations or prosecutions. Our Embassy in Santiago is in contact with the Chilean authorities, and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Tommy Sheppard:

[6436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chilean counterpart on the ongoing protests against the Chilean Government in that country.

Christopher Pincher:

The British Government is concerned at events that have occurred in Chile in recent days. Our Ambassador in Chile has talked with representatives of the Chilean government about the protests and has expressed concern about the violence.

Tommy Sheppard:

[6437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of allegations of sexual violence involving police and military agents during the ongoing protests in Chile.

Christopher Pincher:

The British Government is concerned by events that have occurred in Chile in recent days, including allegations of sexual violence involving police and military agents. We welcome statements by the Chilean Justice Minister and public prosecutors that security forces will not be immune from any investigations or prosecutions, and welcome that the Chilean Government has invited the UN Human Rights Commissioner and Human Rights Watch to send investigatory teams. Our Embassy in Santiago is in contact with the Chilean authorities, and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

■ Eswatini: Human Rights

Conor McGinn:

[6438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Swaziland.

Andrew Stephenson:

The British Government is aware of unconfirmed reports of human rights violations during recent protests in Eswatini. We continue to call for respect of the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association enshrined in Eswatini's constitution. The appointment of a resident High Commissioner to Eswatini in July 2019 has given us the opportunity to deepen our engagement with the Eswatini government. Our High Commissioner has raised the need for proportionate response to protest with senior officials in the Eswatini Government. On 24 October he also raised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the need for any allegations of human rights violations to be investigated.

■ Iran: Christianity**Dr David Drew:**[\[6182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Iranian authorities on the treatment of Christians in that country.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Iran's human rights record continues to be of serious concern to the UK, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has designated it as one of its Human Rights Priority Countries. We regularly raise the treatment of religious and ethnic minorities in Iran with the Iranian Government, and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues. At the UN General Assembly in September, we brought the international community together at a UK-hosted event to shine a spotlight on Iran's human rights abuses. We will also be using Iran's forthcoming Universal Periodic Review in November, to raise concerns about the ongoing discrimination and targeting of religious minority groups, including the Christian community.

■ Iran: Religious Freedom**Dr David Drew:**[\[6183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what monitoring his Department has undertaken of prison sentences imposed on Christian ministers and other religious figures by the Government of Iran on the basis of that people in those positions present a risk to national security.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We are aware of reports about the continued harassment and mistreatment that the Christian and other minority groups face. The continued restrictions on freedoms of expression, religion and belief are deeply worrying. While some religious minorities are formally protected in the constitution, the reality is that many non-Muslims face discrimination. Despite constitutional recognition, the persecution of Christians has been continuous, systemic, and institutionalised.

We support the assessment of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights that discrimination against the Christians in Iran is sanctioned by a lack of constitutional recognition and the absence of other legal protections for adherents of this faith. We regularly call upon Iran to cease harassment of all religious minorities and to fulfil its international and domestic obligations to protect freedom of religion or belief. Work has begun to implement the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Ian Paisley:** [\[4316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the Middle East peace process.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK is strongly supportive of a regional approach to the Middle East peace process and has regular discussions with the US and multilateral institutions, including the UN and EU, to support resolutions and policies that encourage both sides to take steps that rebuild trust which is crucial for negotiations to succeed. The Arab League and Arab states have a key role in the peace process and we are also discussing with them ways we can move the situation forward.

■ Kashmir: Politics and Government**Keith Vaz:** [\[6198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has received on the situation in Kashmir.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We are following the situation in Kashmir closely and are in regular contact with the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[6338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the Government's policy is on Kashmir; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The longstanding position of the UK Government is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Events in Kashmir can have regional and international implications and we urge calm and caution from all. We follow developments closely.

■ Libya: Armed Conflict**Afzal Khan:** [\[5102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps the Government has taken to help to find a political solution to the conflict in Libya.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK is clear there is no military solution in Libya; lasting peace and stability will come only through a political settlement. We are actively engaged in international diplomatic efforts to secure an end to the fighting and a return to the political process, including by leading discussions on Libya in the UN Security Council. The UK welcomes the German initiative to convene an international conference in Berlin in support of the UN-led political process.

■ Persecution of Christians across the Globe Independent Review**Fiona Bruce:**[\[6339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what funding has been allocated to the implementation of the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Review into the Persecution of Christians Worldwide in each of the next five years; and if he will publish his strategic plan for delivering those recommendations.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

For financial year 19/20, a programme fund of £201,401 has been allocated for implementing the Bishop of Truro's recommendations. Separately, the office of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief has been allocated £73,453 this financial year to cover admin and travel costs. Funding for future years, both for the implementation of the recommendations and for the Special Envoy's office, will be decided at a later stage. We have accepted and are working to deliver all the recommendations contained in the Bishop of Truro's report. We do not intend to publish a strategic plan for delivering the recommendations, given the sensitivities around some of them.

■ Syria: British Nationals Abroad**Caroline Lucas:**[\[4299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is taking steps to help ensure that UK nationals detained at Kurdish-run detention facilities in Northern Syria are not (a) taken into custody by Syrian Government forces and (b) transferred to Iraq.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Any decision in relation to the continued detention, transfer or prosecution of detainees is ultimately a matter for authorities under whose jurisdiction the individuals are detained. The British Government is clear that those individuals who have fought for, or supported Daesh, whatever their nationality, should face justice through a fair trial in the most appropriate jurisdiction. The UK will work with international partners, as well as partners in the region who can assist in establishing an appropriate pathway to justice within their territory or legal systems. Any internationally-supported justice mechanism must respect human rights and the rule of law as well as ensure fair trials and due process.

The UK has significant human rights concerns about trials of Daesh-related suspects in domestic courts of Iraq and regime-held areas of Syria including the use of the death penalty, which the UK opposes in all circumstances, as a matter of principle.

■ Turkey: Nuclear Weapons**Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[6181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Turkey on its desire to acquire nuclear weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

Turkey is a party of the international nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has been part of a nuclear-sharing programme among NATO allies. We expect Turkey to continue to respect its obligations as a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We will continue to monitor any claims that Turkey wishes to obtain nuclear weapons.

■ **USA: Open Skies Treaty****Sir Nicholas Soames:**[\[6179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his US counterpart on the importance of that country's continuing co-operation under the Open Skies Treaty.

Christopher Pincher:

Senior officials from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence have raised the topic with their US counterparts, emphasising that we believe the Treaty remains a valuable Confidence and Security Building Measure which contributes to military transparency and reducing the risk of conflict.

■ **Yemen: Armed Conflict****Keith Vaz:**[\[4270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of reports of fighting in Najran, Al Dhale and Hajjah governorates of Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We monitor the conflict in Yemen closely and are concerned about reports of increased violence in parts of Yemen and in Najran, Saudi Arabia. All parties must engage constructively and in good faith to overcome obstacles and find a political solution to end the conflict. We continue to call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to exercise restraint, comply fully with International Humanitarian Law and engage constructively with the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, which is the only way to end the cycle of violence.

■ **Yemen: Freezing of Assets****Keith Vaz:**[\[6197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what criteria the Government uses when deciding whether to freeze funds of Yemeni institutions and individuals.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Sanctions against Yemen were imposed by the UN (under UN Security Council Resolution 2140) in 2014 following an escalation in violence in Yemen, including attacks against military and security facilities. Specific designation criteria set out by that resolution can be applied when there is evidence of individuals or entities engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability

of Yemen. Five individuals are currently designated under this regime and are subject to asset freezes and travel bans. The UK implements these sanctions as part of its international legal obligations.

■ Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Keith Vaz: [\[4269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what preparations his Department is making for the 2020 UN High-Level Pledging Event for Yemen.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

We thank all donors who have provided funding to the UN's 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, who provided approximately \$800 million between them in September.

We continue to encourage all donors to rapidly release their remaining pledges and consider providing further funding to this year's UN appeal.

We await the release of the UN's 2020 Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview and accompanying Humanitarian Response Plan, which will inform our decisions on how we provide our funding next year.

■ Yemen: Peace Negotiations

Keith Vaz: [\[4268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the next meeting of the Yemen Quad is scheduled to take place.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

A date has not yet been fixed for the next Yemen Quad meeting, but we continue to work closely with our Quad partners (US, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) on Yemen, and with other international partners. On 26 September, the UK co-hosted a political event at the UN General Assembly to coordinate the international community's support for the UN-led peace process and endorse the UN Special Envoy's plan to begin wider political discussion.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Autism: Health Services

Faisal Rashid: [\[4366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve support for autistic adults.

Caroline Dinage:

We are committed to supporting autistic people to live healthy, independent lives and to participate in their local communities. We are currently reviewing our cross-Government autism strategy and extending it to include children and young people.

The Government expects to publish the revised all age autism strategy by the end of the calendar year.

Learning disability and autism are one of the clinical priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan which was published on 7 January 2019. The Plan has a renewed focus on supporting people with learning disabilities or autism or both by improving diagnostic pathways, reducing over-prescribing of medicines, and by ensuring people have access to high-quality care and support in the community.

■ **Breast Cancer: Health Services**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[6350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to make it easier for secondary breast cancer patients to make use of compassionate access schemes.

Jo Churchill:

Where an unmet need has been identified, the Early Access to Medicines Scheme (EAMS) run by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency provides opportunity for supply of medicines awaiting a licence. These are to be prescribed under the responsibility of the treating physician.

Atezolizumab in combination with nab-paclitaxel for the treatment of unresectable locally advanced or metastatic triple-negative breast cancer was available to patients through EAMS from March to August this 2019. 57 patients were able to access treatment in England through this EAMS.

■ **Cervical Cancer: Screening**

Christian Matheson:

[\[6417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 October 2019 to Question 1906, what assessment his Department has made of the most appropriate test for patients presenting with symptoms of cervical cancer; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that women with symptoms of cervical cancer under the age of 25 are encouraged to return to their GP if they are denied a cervical screening test but symptoms continue.

Jo Churchill:

All general practitioners (GPs) should use the latest evidence-based guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to identify people at risk of cancer. The NICE referral guidelines for suspected gynaecological cancers recommend that GPs consider a suspected cancer pathway referral (for an appointment within two weeks) for women if, on examination, the appearance of their cervix is consistent with cervical cancer.

People of any age who present with symptoms of cervical cancer, should make an appointment with their GP, who may then make a cancer pathway referral to a gynaecologist for examination. This may result in an additional referral for symptomatic colposcopic examination if cancer is suspected.

■ Disability: Older People**Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[6404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the link between ageing populations and disability as part of the Government response to the UN high level meeting on universal health coverage.

Caroline Dinenge:

It is one of the guiding principles of the National Health Service that a person should have access to health services based on clinical need, irrespective of their age or disability. The NHS Constitution reaffirms this as one of the key principles underpinning all that the NHS does.

Additionally, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty ensures that providers and commissioners of health and care services in the United Kingdom have due regard to the need to take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. Disability and age are both protected characteristics.

■ Genetics: Screening**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[4328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the role of the life sciences industry will be in delivering the Genomic Healthcare Strategy.

Caroline Dinenge:

The life sciences sector is a crucial pillar of the United Kingdom economy, employing close to a quarter of a million people and providing almost £74 billion in turnover annually. As part of the Life Sciences Sector Deal 2, companies have already committed to co-funding a number of leading genomics initiatives, recognising the important role the sector plays in supporting the development of genomic healthcare.

Two landmark industry collaborations that will feature in the Genomic Healthcare Strategy include:

- Whole Genome Sequencing of the UK Biobank: this will be funded by contributions from the UK Government, the Wellcome Trust and industry partners, with Johnson and Johnson, Amgen, GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca providing a combined £100 million to the project; and
- The Accelerating Detection of Disease Challenge: businesses and charities are expected to jointly invest up to £160 million, in addition to £79 million Government investment.

■ Hospitals: Construction**Mr Steve Baker:**[\[5014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) build and (b) renovate hospitals over the next 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

Over 150 sustainability and transformation partnership schemes have been awarded around £2.4 billion of capital funding since July 2017 to modernise and transform the National Health Service's buildings and services. On 5 August 2019, the Government announced a further £1.8 billion increase to NHS capital spending, of which £850 million is funding to allow 20 new hospital upgrades to start as soon as possible.

On 29 September the Government announced the next stage of its strategic investment in the NHS; the Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP). The plan strategy document was published on 30 September 2019 and will deliver a long-term, rolling five-year programme of investment in health infrastructure. This will ensure that health infrastructure is fit-for-purpose for decades to come. The package of funding for 40 new hospitals includes:

- £2.7 billion for six new hospital projects to be delivered in our first phase of major hospital rebuilds (HIP1); and
- £100 million to give the go-ahead to 21 major projects, covering 34 hospitals to go to the next stage of developing their plans, to be delivered in the second phase of major hospital rebuilds, subject to business case approval.

Future phases will be supported through the Chancellor's commitment at Spending Round 2019 on 4 September to provide a multi-year capital budget for the Department at the next capital review.

■ Hospitals: Parking**Frank Field:**[\[6239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to bring forward proposals requiring all NHS trusts and foundation trusts to abolish all charges for disabled car parking at NHS hospitals in England.

Edward Argar:

The level and appropriateness of car parking charges at National Health Service sites is the responsibility of the local NHS trust. The Department have published the NHS Car Parking Principles which clearly state that concessions should be offered to groups who most need help, such as disabled people including those with blue badges and temporary disabilities.

■ Hospitals: Private Finance Initiative**Philip Davies:**[\[6311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what each hospital's annual (a) income and (b) payment for a PFI scheme was in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Edward Argar:

Trusts make private finance initiative (PFI) unitary payments from their annual income. The Department does not pay PFI credits to trusts. NHS England has

provided data showing 2018-19 annual income for trusts with PFI schemes, which is attached.

HM Treasury publishes annual unitary charge forecast data for PFI schemes across government, including the National Health Service. The data can be found on the gov.uk website which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-finance-initiative-and-private-finance-2-projects-2018-summary-data>

Attachments:

1. PQ6311 table [PQ6311 - Philip Davies - Spreadsheet of Turnover by Trust - PFIs.xlsx]

■ **London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust: Finance**

Gareth Thomas:

[4915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the Shaping the healthier future bid, Strategic Outline Case 1 from London North West University Healthcare Trust was rejected; and if will publish the papers presented as part of that bid.

Edward Argar:

The Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF) bid proposed the reconfiguration of acute hospitals across outer north west London, together with investment in out of hospital hubs and primary care. The programme would have included moving services between acute providers to downgrade Ealing and Charing Cross Hospitals from major to local hospitals with a reduction in their accident and emergency (A&E) facilities. This will not now take place.

The Department has made it clear to NHS England and NHS Improvement that service change must be strongly aligned with the content of the NHS Long Term Plan, and this was a central element of the decision to withdraw support from aspects of Shaping a Healthier Future.

Local commissioners agreed to draw the SaHF programme to a conclusion, and NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing to work with the local National Health Service to develop service plans to improve health and care, in particular continuing to develop community services in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.

The basis of the decision to withdraw support was made clear in my Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's announcement on 26 March.

■ **Medicine: Education**

Dr Dan Poulter:

[6336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to introduce a national exam for all medical students in England upon graduating from medical school.

Edward Argar:

The Department has no plans to introduce a national exam for medical students in England upon graduating from medical school.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the independent regulator of doctors in the United Kingdom, and sets the standards for undergraduate medical education and training.

The GMC has announced that from 2023 it will introduce a Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) that all UK medical students and non-European Economic Area international applicants must pass before they can join the medical register. The MLA will test the core knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to practise safely in the UK.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Barbara Keeley:

[6323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Long Term Plan, what progress his Department has made on the commitment to introduce waiting time targets for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services; and if he will publish the results of waiting time pilots for those services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are making good progress towards the children and young people's eating disorder waiting time target, with the latest data (April – June 2019) showing:

- 77.7% of young people started treatment for an urgent case within one week against a target of 95% by 2020/21; and
- 83.4% of young people started treatment for a routine case within four weeks against a target of 95% by 2020/21.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits the National Health Service to test comprehensive waiting time standards for adults and children over the next decade. This builds on the already established waiting time standards for children and young people's eating disorder services, early intervention for psychosis that covers all ages and adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services. All of these standards are being met or are on track for delivery by 2020/21, in line with previous commitments.

With regard to waiting time targets for children and young people's mental health services, NHS England is currently working with 12 pilot sites nationally to test approaches that could feasibly deliver a four-week waiting time for access to NHS support. Delivering and maintaining a waiting time across the large and complex children and young people's mental health pathway is a challenge, and we are proceeding carefully so as not to establish any perverse incentives.

The pilots will test not only what it takes to achieve and maintain a four-week waiting time, but also how best to define and measure this access to specialist children and young people's mental health services.

The agreed pilots end in 2020/21. Results will then be evaluated, and this will inform a recommendation to Government on the potential development and roll out of access and waiting time standards for all children and young people who need specialist mental health services.

■ NHS: Negligence

Mr John Baron: [6246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the criteria by which the NHS assess the merits of clinical negligence claims prior to litigation.

Mr John Baron: [6247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the merits of the practice of the NHS paying their lawyers the same fee regardless of the outcome of a claim.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS Resolution manages clinical negligence and other claims against the National Health Service in England, and shares learning from claims to help improve safety for patients and staff. NHS Resolution has a responsibility to settle justified claims fairly and promptly and defend unjustified claims to secure NHS resources. Each case must be considered on its own merits and it is important that a proper investigation is undertaken. NHS Resolution aims to get to the right answer as quickly as possible in every case and to help resolve claims sooner, and without the need for court proceedings. To support this NHS Resolution launched a new mediation service in December 2016.

NHS Resolution is an arm's length body of the Department and is accountable to the Department and its performance is subject to regular review through the Department's sponsorship arrangements. The Department's assessment is that NHS Resolution is a well-run and efficient organisation and that it has had some success, within the current legal framework, in containing the cost of NHS litigation, a view that was supported by the National Audit Office, in its report 'Managing the costs of clinical negligence in trusts' published in September 2017 which can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/managing-the-costs-of-clinical-negligence-in-trusts/>

NHS Resolution regularly agrees large-scale contracts for legal services, using its position as a bulk purchaser to obtain the best expertise at value for money for the health service. The contracts include a combination of fixed and capped fees as well as competitive hourly rates for its panel firms, which are also required to support NHS Resolution's work to learn from claims to improve safety.

■ Psychiatry: Recruitment

Luciana Berger: [6347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of progress against the April 2016 NHS England General Practice Forward View plan to recruit an extra 3000 mental health therapists.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England has advised that its interim target of 800 extra Improving Access to Psychological Therapies therapists working in primary care by March 2018 has been met. NHS England is now analysing data to establish if the target to increase this number to 1,500 by March 2019 has been achieved.

■ Speech and Language Therapy: Finance**Geraint Davies:**[\[4912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report of the Children's Commissioner entitled *We need to talk: Access to speech and language therapy*, published in June 2019, what plans he has to ensure that spending on speech and language therapy services can be tracked at the (a) local and (b) national level.

Caroline Dinenge:

Departmental officials met with representatives of the Children's Commissioner in October 2019 and will continue work with the Children's Commissioner's Office as part of engagement with other statutory bodies to address challenges involved in improving transparency of expenditure data.

■ Vaccination**Rosie Cooper:**[\[6297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of access to health services on trends in the level of vaccination rates in England.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon MP) on 29 October 2019 to Question [2735](#).

■ Vaccination: Children**Rosie Cooper:**[\[6296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of childhood vaccination rates in England.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England monitors trends in the level of childhood vaccination rates.

Although vaccination rates remain high, England has seen a small decline in coverage since 2013. The most recent figures, published in September 2019, show vaccine coverage increased slightly or remained the same compared to the last quarter for all vaccines, with the exception of flu vaccine uptake, when measured in children aged one, two and five years old. This data can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cover-of-vaccination-evaluated-rapidly-cover-programme-2019-to-2020-quarterly-data>

Yearly flu childhood vaccination rates can be viewed at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839350/Surveillance_of_influenza_and_other_respiratory_viruses_in_the_UK_2018_to_2019-FINAL.pdf.

HOME OFFICE

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Caroline Lucas:

[6334]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens living in the UK have (a) applied and (b) yet to apply for settled status; and if she will publish the data she holds on application conversions.

Brandon Lewis:

The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications received can be found in the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme monthly statistics' available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics-september-2019>.

Figures in this publication refer specifically to applications made to the EU Settlement Scheme and, as noted in the statistical report, cannot be directly compared with estimates of the resident population of European Economic Area nationals in the UK, which do not take account of people's migration intentions and will therefore include people who have come to the UK for a range of purposes, including some who have no intention to settle in the UK.

The Home Office publishes a range of statistics on the EU Settlement Scheme including on applications and their outcomes, but we are not yet able to publish statistics relating to those applicants with pre-settled status who subsequently apply for settled status. However, Home Office statisticians keep the content of the statistical reports under review and will take into account the views of statistics users as they continue to develop these statistics.

Dr Sarah Wollaston:

[6360]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is available for EU citizens with (a) dementia and (b) other similar health conditions when applying for settled status given the possibility that they may have lost the necessary paperwork.

Brandon Lewis:

The EU Settlement Scheme is designed to make it simple and straightforward for EU citizens and their family members to apply to stay in the UK after we leave the EU. We are looking for reasons to grant status, not reasons to refuse, and the scheme is performing well.

The Home Office has put in place a comprehensive vulnerability strategy to ensure that the EU Settlement Scheme is accessible for all, including those requiring

someone to make an application on their behalf. We are also engaging with relevant stakeholders, such as the Department for Health and Social Care, the Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Devolved Administrations, to assess the needs of vulnerable groups and ensure they are met.

The Home Office has introduced a range of support for applicants, including assisted digital support at around 300 locations across the UK and the EU Settlement Scheme Resolution Centre, open seven days a week, to provide help and information by telephone and e-mail. We have also provided up to £9 million of grant funding to 57 voluntary and community organisations across the UK to enable them to mobilise services targeted at vulnerable EU citizens.

Regarding specific support for (a) those with dementia and (b) other similar health conditions, such as those without mental capacity, the Home Office has designed a scheme that allows applicants to consent to an appropriate third party to apply on their behalf. This means that care givers, family members and friends can provide the necessary assistance to those who need it.

The Home Office is aware that a range of vulnerable applicants may face significant challenges in securing evidence to support their application. For this reason, we will in such circumstances accept a range of evidence of identity and residence on behalf of an applicant, working with the person making the application to establish the applicant's eligibility based on all the evidence available. Caseworkers are trained to exercise discretion in the applicant's favour where appropriate.

■ Prisoners: Foreign Nationals

Jo Stevens: [\[6424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many foreign nationals given sentences of imprisonment for public protection have been deported from the UK in each year since 2010.

Jo Stevens: [\[6425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of foreign nationals serving sentences of imprisonment for public protection have been deported to countries that do not have an equivalent sentence in each year since 2010.

Seema Kennedy:

The Government is absolutely committed to removing Foreign National Offenders from the UK, and any foreign national who comes to our country and abuses our hospitality by breaking the law should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them.

Since 2010, we have removed almost 50,000 Foreign National Offenders from our prisons, immigration removal centres and the community, with more than 5,000 removed in 2018/19.

Providing the information requested would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office does publish quarterly statistics on the numbers of Foreign Nationals removed from the UK. This data can be found by accessing the following <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2019/list-of-tables>

■ Visas: South America

Neil Coyle: [\[6392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending visa-free entry to the UK to citizens of (a) Colombia, (b) Ecuador and (c) Peru.

Brandon Lewis:

The UK keeps its visa system under regular review. Decisions on any changes are always taken in the round covering a wide range of considerations. These will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns, reciprocal arrangements for UK nationals and prosperity.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local Government Finance

Paul Farrelly: [\[6258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to devise a new funding formula for local authorities which (a) adequately reflects need and (b) does not disadvantage areas with low levels of business rate revenue.

Luke Hall:

The government's aim is to increase local government's retention of business rates from 50 per cent to 75 per cent in 2021-22. However, we recognise that redistribution of business rates between local authorities will continue to be necessary where locally retained business rates do not meet their needs.

We have listened to calls for a simpler, up-to-date, evidence-based funding formula and we will aim to deliver this alongside an increase in business rates retention. We are working closely with local government representatives to consider the drivers of local authorities' costs, the resources available to them to fund services, and how to account for these in a way that draws a more transparent and understandable link between local circumstances and local authority funding.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ **Department for International Development: Brexit**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[6481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many of his civil servants have been deployed to other Departments from his Department's (a) London office b) Scotland office and (c) offices overseas to work on tasks relating to the UK leaving the EU.

Andrew Stephenson:

As at 28 October, the breakdown of DFID staff deployed to other government departments to work on EU exit related tasks is as follows:

OFFICE	NO. DEPLOYED
DFID London	127
DFID Scotland	21
DFID Overseas	Less than 5

■ **Developing Countries: Females**

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[6325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if he will discuss advancing the sexual health and rights of older women at the 2019 Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The Nairobi Summit on Population and Development 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 is helping shape the statement for the summit. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights includes all women.

■ **Developing Countries: Malnutrition**

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[6326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps his Department's climate and agriculture teams will take to ensure that the development of more climate resilient crop varieties will improve nutritional outcomes for the poorest people in countries with the highest burden of malnutrition and food insecurity; and what steps his Department will take to track those outcomes.

Andrew Stephenson:

DFID funds the development of new crop varieties which are high yielding, climate and disease resilient, and have improved nutritional value. This includes flood tolerant rice that reduces risks for 10 million smallholders in South Asia, and drought tolerant maize that delivers more stable yields under climate stress being grown by 3 million households in Africa. DFID also supports the development and delivery of biofortified crops, which are conventionally bred with higher levels of zinc, iron and Vitamin A, as well as climate-resilient traits such as drought and pest tolerance. By 2018, DFID had reached over 8 million households with these climate-resilient and nutritious crops such as high iron beans and pearl millet, and orange sweet potato (high in Vitamin A).

DFID plans to reach 13.5 million households in countries with high levels of nutrition insecurity by 2022 with these new biofortified crops. DFID tracks outcomes closely through its international research partners, and invests in the generation of high quality evidence to measure impact and cost-effectiveness of such interventions.

Mr Virendra Sharma:**[6327]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking with his international counterparts to develop stronger health systems which integrate malnutrition prevention and treatment to achieve universal health coverage.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

The UK championed the prevention and treatment of malnutrition as a core aspect of universal health coverage at the high-level meeting at the United Nations General Assembly in September. This is key to ending preventable deaths of mothers, newborns, and children, given that malnutrition drives 45% of child deaths – a top priority for the UK as recently announced.

To support countries to achieve universal health coverage the UK is also investing in health systems strengthening and service delivery that integrates nutrition in countries such as Bangladesh and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have also taken steps to integrate nutrition more strongly into global health initiatives such as the Global Financing Facility. This is in line with the UK's commitment at the United Nations General Assembly to address malnutrition as one of the leading causes of illness and death.

The UK has also been working closely with the Government of Japan to ensure that commitments to strengthen the integration of nutrition into health systems are a key plank of the 2020 Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Trade Agreements**

Mr Steve Baker: [\[5017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential economic merits of a trade deal between the UK and (a) the United States, (b) Australia and (c) Japan.

Conor Burns:

The Secretary of State recently visited the US, Australia, and Japan to meet her counterparts as well as British businesses and reiterated her commitment to free trade agreements (FTAs) with these countries.

At the start of new FTA negotiations, the Government will publish its Outline Approach which will include our negotiating objectives and be accompanied by a scoping assessment which will be informed by economic modelling, setting out the potential economic impacts of any agreement.

JUSTICE**■ Courts: Administrative Delays**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[6330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases have been listed as outstanding in the (a) criminal, (b) civil and (c) family courts in each week of 2019.

Chris Philp:

Quarterly statistics on outstanding cases in the criminal courts are published by MoJ in [Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly](#).

Monthly figures on outstanding cases in the criminal and family courts are published as Management Information by HMCTS

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-courts-and-tribunals-service/about/statistics#management-information>.

None of these figures are available in a form that can be broken down to weekly figures and therefore the information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Courts: Closures

Richard Burgon: [\[6451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Crown (b) magistrates' courts closed in each year since 2010.

Chris Philp:

The table below provides the number of Crown court closures and Magistrates' court closures since 2010.

FINANCIAL YEAR	CROWN COURT CLOSURES	MAGISTRATES' COURT CLOSURES
2010-2011	0	1
2011-2012	0	83
2012-2013	0	5
2013-2014	0	5
2014-2015	1	4
2015-2016	0	6
2016-2017	4*	41*
2017-2018	0	13
2018-2019	1	4
1 April 2019 to 29 October 2019	0	3

The information above does not include local integrations.

*Includes Dolgellau Crown and Magistrates Court, and Bury St Edmunds Crown and Magistrates' Court, these two sites are logged in both columns.

The decision to close any court is not taken lightly – it only happens following full public consultation and only when effective access to justice can be maintained. Courts that have closed were either underused, dilapidated or too close to one another.

Since 2015/6 HMCTS has raised approximately £129m from the sales of surplus buildings to reinvest in the wider reform programme.

Richard Burgon:

[6453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which courts that closed since 2010 have yet to be sold; and what the costs to the public purse have been of each of those court premises since the they were closed.

Chris Philp:

The table below provides courts that are closed but not disposed of and the holding costs since the court closed. Holding costs include utilities, rates, maintenance and security.

COURT	TOTAL
Banbury - Magistrates	£41,155
Birmingham (Youth Court) - Magistrates	£236,657
Chichester Combined Court (Southgate)	£65,555
Chichester - Magistrates	£245,002
Chorley - Magistrates	£75,286
Maidenhead - Magistrates	£94,952
Fleetwood - Magistrates	£56,137
Harlow - Magistrates	£20,457
Hartlepool - Magistrates	£214,562
Runcorn - Magistrates	£411,683
Scunthorpe - Magistrates	£133,559
Scunthorpe - Magistrates Offices	£132,946
Sheffield ETS	£142,416
Southampton Combined (Western Range)	£138,319
Sunderland - County	£56,505
Telford - County	£176,349
Torquay – Magistrates	£148,382

Since 2015/16 HMCTS has raised approximately £129m from the sale of surplus buildings to reinvest in the wider reform programme

The decision to close any court is not taken lightly – it only happens following full public consultation and only when effective access to justice can be maintained. Courts that have closed were either underused, dilapidated or too close to one another.

■ Courts: Repairs and Maintenance

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[6332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many outstanding repairs across HM Courts and Tribunals estate there were in (a) 2010, (b) 2015 and (c) 2018.

Chris Philp:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Operating Costs

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[6328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse has been of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (a) court maintenance and repairs, (b) staff costs and (c) public communications strategies in each of the last three years.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service expenditure for last three financial years is provided below.

£000s		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
a	Maintenance and repairs ¹	86,700	74,900	88,760
b	Staff costs ²	503,963	523,810	536,938
c	Public communications strategies ³	939	1,165	1,397

HM Courts & Tribunals Service are working on an ambitious programme of court reform, which aims to bring new technology and modern ways of working to the way justice is administered.

We are building a modern system for administering justice which will benefit everyone who uses it. By designing systems around the public who need and use our services, we can create a more effective system for them and generate efficiencies for the taxpayer.

The reform programme was launched in September 2016, and the expenditure for maintenance and repairs, staff costs and communications over the three year period 2016/17 to 2018-19 are each influenced by this.

¹ Maintenance and repairs expenditure includes fixed maintenance, variable and planned works.

² Staff costs includes permanently employed staff, agency and contract workers. It does not include members of the judiciary, who are independent office holders, not employees of HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

³ The cost of public communications strategies is not separately identifiable in the financial accounts. Consequently, the overall cost of HM Courts and Tribunals Service communications directorate has been provided. This excludes press office costs borne by the Ministry of Justice on behalf of HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

■ Mentally Disordered Offenders

Jo Stevens:

[\[6428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection have served (a) all and (b) part of their sentence at (i) Ashworth, (ii) Broadmoor and (iii) Rampton High Security Psychiatric Hospitals in each of the year since 2010.

Lucy Frazer:

It is not possible to provide the information requested, as it could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The number of transferred prisoners serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection who were detained under sections 47/49 of the Mental Health Act 1983 at each of the High Secure Hospitals as at 31 December 2013 to 31 December 2018 is set out below.

IPPS DETAINED UNDER
THE MHA AS OF 31ST

DEC	ASHWORTH	BROADMOOR	RAMPTON
2013	21	16	20
2014	20	13	27
2015	20	12	28
2016	21	12	23
2017	20	16	31
2018	19	16	26

■ Ministry of Justice: Contracts

Richard Burgon:

[\[6454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department holds on the financial deductions levied against companies with which his Department has contracts.

Chris Philp:

The information can only be provided at a disproportionate cost. The Ministry of Justice currently has over 1000 active contracts with 500+ suppliers. To obtain the information for each supplier would require an estimated 15 minutes per contract.

■ Occupation Orders: Legal Aid Scheme

Richard Burgon:

[\[6452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many victims of domestic violence have been refused legal aid in relation to an application for an occupation order in each year since 2010.

Wendy Morton:

YEAR	OCCUPATION ORDER	REFUSALS
	APPLICATIONS	TOTAL
2010-2011	715	27
2011-2012	524	21
2012-2013	600	35
2013-2014	208	15
2014-2015	215	8
2015-2016	243	13
2016-2017	354	27
2017-2018	303	25
2018-2019	376	44

Figures are based on the volume of applications made rather than the number of discrete individuals. One person may make more than one application for legal aid.

The upper limits on financial means eligibility in cases involving protective orders due to Domestic Violence are waived, meaning a client will never be assessed out of scope on finances. The Legal Aid Agency would never refuse an application on the basis that it did not believe the applicant to be a victim of domestic abuse.

Refusals will be based on consideration of whether the circumstances of the case indicate that the court is unlikely to grant an order (minor incidents or passage of time since they occurred), whether there is an alternative remedy available (warning letter, police involvement) or whether the client is already sufficiently protected (bail conditions, remand in custody).

■ Offenders: Rehabilitation

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[6477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 944 on Reoffenders, how many offenders in each category were supervised by (a) the National Probation Service and (b) community rehabilitation companies.

Lucy Frazer:

The table below shows the number of Serious Further Offence (SFO) notifications – that is, cases of an offender under probation supervision charged with an SFO - received between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018, by SFO offence, where the offender was supervised by a) the National Probation Service (NPS) and b) Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC).

Not all charges for an SFO will result in a conviction. In any year, in about 50% of cases either the charges are dropped before trial, or the offender is acquitted following trial or the offender is convicted of a less serious offence.

SFO Offence	2014*		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	NPS	CRC	NPS	CRC	NPS	CRC	NPS	CRC	NPS	CRC
<i>Arson with intent to endanger life</i>		1	11	4	16	0	18	2	16	2
Assault by penetration	17	7	13	17	17	18	18	19	6	9
Attempt or conspiracy to commit murder	31	15	18	36	22	38	34	51	36	43
<i>Aggravated Burglary</i>	24	0	22	0	40	1	57	0	35	0
Causing death by dangerous/careless driving/aggravated vehicle taking	5	0	1	6	5	7	3	7	5	11
<i>False imprisonment</i>	11	0	9	1	24	1	29	0	17	0
<i>Firearms offences including possession with intent</i>	19	0	16	2	12	0	15	1	16	1
<i>Kidnapping</i>	22	1	11	4	12	2	21	1	28	0
Manslaughter	8	0	1	4	5	8	3	13	4	9

	2014*		2015		2016		2017		2018	
Murder	56	15	28	41	26	60	49	65	54	78
<i>Offences under the Explosive Substances Act</i>	0	0	0	0	5	1	2	2	2	0
<i>Other qualifying sexual offences</i>	26	0	34	2	24	2	33	5	19	2
<i>Other serious violent offence</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	3	0
Other specified offence causing death	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rape	129	43	112	105	118	127	111	131	70	60
<i>Robbery with firearm</i>	8	0	11	2	8	0	15	0	12	1
Under 13 sexual offences including rape	20	7	22	12	16	9	15	17	15	8
Total	391	90	310	238	350	274	425	315	338	224

1. *CRCs were created as part of Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) in June 2014. Therefore data provided for NPS for 2014 include cases managed by former Probation Trusts prior to TR.
2. The NPS and CRCs are required to complete automatic reviews on any eligible offender who has been charged with (including attempted or conspiracy to commit offences): murder manslaughter, other specified offences causing death, rape or assault by penetration, or a sexual offence against a child under 13 years of age.
3. Conditional reviews are completed when an offender has been assessed as high risk of harm during the current sentence (NPS only) or where no risk assessment has been completed.
4. Not all SFO notifications result in the completion of a reviews as charges can be reduced or dropped. Not every offender charged with a SFO is convicted.
5. The data represents SFO charges and not a unique count of offenders.
6. Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

■ Personal Injury: Compensation

Ellie Reeves:

[\[6488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what representations he has received on the provisions of the Civil Liability Act 2018 in relation to children and protected parties injured in road traffic accidents using the new claims portal; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The applicability of the Government's whiplash reforms to both minors and other protected parties was debated by both Houses during the Parliamentary passage of the Civil Liability Act 2018.

We have since received representations on this issue from the Motor Accident Solicitors Society, the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers and the Association of Consumer Support Organisations.

As the Government made clear during the parliamentary debates, we see no fundamental reason why the level of compensation to be paid to minors or other protected parties in the event of a road traffic accident minor injury claim should be different to that paid to another injured party. The Government therefore intends that the tariff of fixed damages for whiplash injuries should apply to minors and protected parties.

The Government has since considered the separate issue of whether the proposed increase in the small claims limit for road traffic accident claims from £1,000 to £5,000 should apply to minors and protected parties. We have decided that, for the time being, they should be exempted from the increase in the limit and from the need to use the new online whiplash claims system which is intended to accompany implementation of the whiplash system. This is to enable consideration of the experience of non-vulnerable claimants using the new online service under the new limit before considering the long-term approach for children and other vulnerable parties.

All minors and other protected parties in civil proceedings are subject to specific protections through Part 21 of the Civil Procedure Rules. These include the requirement to be represented by a litigation friend and for the settlement of a claim to be approved by the court. These protections are unaffected by the measures in the Civil Liability Act.

■ Prisoners' Transfers

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[6472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time is between approval of a prisoner's request for transfer to another prison and transfer taking place.

Lucy Frazer:

We do not maintain a central record of timescales for prisoners' transfers to other prisons.

Prisoner transfers are dependent upon several factors, including the reason for the transfer, the number of spaces available in the estate and the location to which the prisoner has requested a move.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[6475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost is of transporting prisoners using (a) private contractors, (b) the police and (c) the Prison Service.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[6476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what contracts his Department holds with private contractors to provide transport for prisoner transfers between prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) contracts are delivered by GEOAmey and Serco and cover a range of services, including secure prisoner transportation between prisons, police stations and other named places of detention and courts, and transportation of prisoners between prison establishments. The contract also includes custodial services and dock escorts in courts. There is no legal or business requirement to collate the cost of individual journeys, but the annual value of these contracts is approximately £139million.

Information relating to parts b) and c) of 6475 is not collected centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Private providers continue to play an important role in the prison estate. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will continue to closely monitor the performance of all providers and we will not hesitate to take action where standards fall short.

■ Prisoners: Childbirth

Imran Hussain: [\[2763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women gave birth in prison in each year since 2010.

Imran Hussain: [\[2764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women prisoners were admitted to hospital (a) after giving birth and (b) before giving birth in each year since 2010.

Imran Hussain: [\[2765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children born in prison were admitted to hospital after birth in each year since 2010.

Imran Hussain: [\[2766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women were pregnant when entering prison in each year since 2010.

Imran Hussain:

[\[2767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what midwifery training prison officers in female prisons receive.

Lucy Frazer:

We are currently carrying out a fundamental review of our Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) policy, as part of which, we are looking at improving the information and data available in relation to pregnancy and births. This is a complex area and there are sensitive issues relating to medical information and data protection which must be taken into account, but we are looking closely at this issue to drive improvements in our support for pregnant women across the estate.

In the interim, we have worked to provide a total figure for the number of pregnant women across the Women's Estate, based on a bespoke data collection exercise. We can inform you that the total number of women who declared they were pregnant was 47, as at 15:00hrs on Monday 28 October 2019. This represents less than 2 per cent of the population, which stood at 3,808 at the time of the exercise.

We know that it is extremely rare for a woman to give birth in prison – because every step is taken to get them to hospital – but those unique cases are invariably down to the unpredictability of labour.

The number of women who give birth in prison is not collected centrally and as there is no central data field to record this data, prisons would be required to conduct a manual search of their records for all women who have been taken into custody over a specific period. Although the prison population sits at around 3,800, this does not account for the high churn in prison numbers and therefore the number of records to be searched would be much higher. However, an internal data collection exercise conducted in 2018 indicated that prisons reported fewer than 5 births in prison in the past any one year.

The remaining information you have requested is not currently held centrally and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

All pregnant women are seen by a professional midwife at least fortnightly or more frequently if required. Healthcare in prisons is provided by specially trained medics and nurses. Medical emergencies are dealt with by 999 calls and prisoners have access to an emergency bell to alert staff at night. Women in prison have access to the same range of services as they would in the community.

Policy Guidance adjoining the Women's Policy Framework 2018 contains comprehensive operational guidance on perinatal support to women in custody. To accompany the policy, a training course for managing pregnant women in custody and MBUs is available to prison staff supporting pregnant women, or women with children in MBUs.

■ Prisoners: Suicide

Jo Stevens:

[6426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have taken their own life whilst serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection in each year since 2010.

Lucy Frazer:

The most recent published data about self-inflicted deaths in custody includes figures up to the end of the 2018, broken down by type of sentence. It is in table 1.11 of *Deaths in prison custody 1978 to 2018*, which can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-september-2018>. However, we have recently identified possible errors in the published data. I will write to the Hon Member with updated figures when they are available, and ensure that the next issue of data includes corrected figures.

Every death in custody is a tragedy, and we are committed to learning lessons from these deaths wherever possible. Most of the deaths were from natural causes but some were self-inflicted, and the Government is taking unprecedented action to improve safety in prisons, including redoubling our efforts to prevent such deaths. We have recruited over 4,700 more prison officers since October 2016, and we now have the greatest number in post since early 2012. This is allowing us to implement the key worker role, providing staff dedicated time to support individual prisoners.

We are improving support for prisoners in their early days in custody and developing a new version of the multi-disciplinary ACCT case management process for those at risk of suicide. We have rolled out a revised and improved Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention course. This is being completed by all new staff and as refresher training by all existing staff. Nearly 25,000 staff have already begun this training and over 14,000 have completed all six modules.

While we are focused on giving all prisoners serving IPP sentences opportunities to progress towards release, public protection must remain our priority. A range of initiatives are in place, as part of the joint action plan, co-owned by HM Prison and Probation Service and the Parole Board, which are having a positive impact on the progression of those serving an IPP sentence.

■ Reoffenders

Liz Saville Roberts:

[6478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 944 on Reoffenders, how many offenders in each category were (a) male and (b) female.

Lucy Frazer:

The table below shows the number of Serious Further Offence (SFO) notifications – that is, cases of an offender under probation supervision charged with an SFO - received between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018, by SFO offence, where the offender was a) male b) female.

Not all charges for an SFO will result in a conviction. In any year, in about 50% of cases either the charges are dropped before trial, or the offender is acquitted following trial or the offender is convicted of a less serious offence.

SFO Offence	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
<i>Arson with intent to endanger life</i>	2	13	1	14	2	14	6	14	4	14
Assault by penetration	0	24	0	30	0	35	1	36	0	15
Attempt or conspiracy to commit murder	0	46	3	51	4	56	3	82	2	77
<i>Aggravated Burglary</i>	0	24	1	21	0	41	1	56	0	35
Causing death by dangerous/careless driving/aggravated vehicle taking	0	5	0	7	0	12	0	10	0	16
<i>False imprisonment</i>	0	11	1	9	0	25	0	29	0	17
<i>Firearms offences including possession with intent</i>	0	19	1	17	0	12	0	16	0	17
<i>Kidnapping</i>	0	23	0	15	0	14	0	22	0	28
Manslaughter	1	7	0	5	1	12	1	15	0	13
Murder	5	66	3	66	5	81	5	109	6	126
<i>Offences under the Explosive Substances Act</i>	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	2
<i>Other qualifying sexual offences</i>	0	26	0	36	1	25	1	37	0	21
<i>Other serious violent offence</i>	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	3
Other specified	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
offence causing death					
Rape	1	171	0	217	0
<i>Robbery with firearm</i>	0	8	0	13	0
Under 13 sexual offences including rape	0	27	0	34	0
Total	9	472	10	538	13

1. The NPS and CRCs are required to complete automatic reviews on any eligible offender who has been charged with (including attempted or conspiracy to commit offences): murder manslaughter, other specified offences causing death, rape or assault by penetration, or a sexual offence against a child under 13 years of age.
2. Conditional reviews are completed when an offender has been assessed as high risk of harm during the current sentence (NPS only) or where no risk assessment has been completed.
3. Not all SFO notifications result in the completion of a reviews as charges can be reduced or dropped. Not every offender charged with a SFO is convicted.
4. The data represents SFO charges and not a unique count of offenders.
5. Data Sources and Quality. We have drawn these figures from administrative IT systems which, as with some large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

■ Sentencing: Children

Richard Burgon:

[4335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children were sentenced to custody for a sentence of six months or less in 2018 by ethnicity.

Wendy Morton:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on the sentencing outcomes of court proceedings. Information on the age and ethnicity of those prosecuted, the type of crimes and the sentence given can be found by using the Sentencing data tool available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802321/sentencing-tool-2018.xlsx

In the Sentencing data tool:

Use the 'Age Group' filter and select juveniles. Use the 'Custodial Sentence Length' filter to select '01: up to and including 1 month', '02: over 1 month and up to and including 2 months', '03: over 2 months and up to and including 3 months', '04: over 3 months to less than 6 months' and '05: 6 months'

In the pivot table options remove 'Offence Type' from the Rows field and drag 'Ethnicity in its place.

■ Trials: Video Conferencing

Richard Burgon: [\[6449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many occasions a video link failure led to the (a) delay and (b) postponement to another day for a (a) trial and (b) hearing in each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

The department does not hold the information requested on how many occasions a video link failure led to the (a) delay and (b) postponement to another day for a (a) trial and (b) hearing in each of the last five years.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: International Men's Day

Philip Davies: [\[7104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans his Department has to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2019.

Julian Smith:

No one should suffer unfair treatment because of their gender. Every year International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight how outcomes for men and boys can be improved and to talk about some of the important work going on every day across Government to do this.

The work ranges from the introduction of shared parental leave, which allows men to take time away from the workplace and bond with their new children, benefitting that crucial long-term relationship for both parent and child, to our programme tackling LGBT bullying in schools which seeks to protect those who may be victimised by outdated and stereotypical ideas of what it means to be a 'real man'.

Government is also working with local authorities to ensure their suicide prevention plans support more men, and in the Domestic Abuse Bill we propose to create a statutory definition of domestic abuse that makes clear men also can be victims of this abhorrent crime.

My Department has active staff-led Diversity & Inclusion and Wellbeing networks and we plan to mark International Men's Day on 19 November by communicating key messages on our departmental Intranet - that we want to see all people being treated fairly, regardless of gender and highlighting the support available to men in the

workplace from shared parental leave to access to our qualified Mental Health First Aiders.

We will also commission blogs to share male perspectives, which we find is an effective method of raising awareness and generating discussion of important issues.

SCOTLAND

■ Invergarry-Kyle of Lochalsh Trunk Road (A87) Extension (Skye Bridge Crossing) Toll Order (Variation) Order 1999

Deidre Brock: [\[5449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what records his office holds on the creation of the assignment statement for the Invergarry-Kyle of Lochalsh Trunk Road (A87) Extension (Skye Bridge Crossing) Toll Order 1999.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Skye Bridge Crossing is not a reserved matter under the Scotland Act 1998. Extant records on the Skye Bridge tolls, whether pre-devolution or post-devolution, are therefore held by the Scottish Government or the National Records of Scotland.

■ Whisky: Scotland

Kirstene Hair: [\[5476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of (a) trends in the level of investment in the Scotch Whisky industry and (b) the effect of that investment on the UK economy in the last five years.

Mr Alister Jack:

Scotland's Whisky industry plays a vital role in both the UK and Scottish economy.

The Scotch Whisky industry invested more than £500 million in capital projects over the last five years and for every £100 of added value the industry produces, another £45 is generated in the broader economy. Overall, this industry is estimated to have contributed £5.5 billion to the UK economy in GVA in 2018. This is a 10% increase when compared to the industry's GVA in 2016.

The industry continues to support 42,000 jobs across the UK. This includes 10,500 directly in Scotland, and 7,000 in rural communities. Globally, a record high of over £4.7 billion of Scotch Whisky was exported in 2018 to around 180 countries.

Kirstene Hair: [\[5477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the contribution of the Scotch Whisky industry to tourism in the UK.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Scotch Whisky industry is strategically important to the economy of Scotland.

As a result of continued industry investments, Scotch Whisky tourism saw record numbers of visitors in 2018. Over 2 million tourists from over 20 different countries

visited Scotch Whisky distilleries for the first time. Also, spending at visitor centres was up by 12.2% to £68.3m - additional £7.4m compared with 2017, and 154% more than in 2010.

Collectively, Scotch Whisky distilleries remain the third most visited attraction in Scotland.

TRANSPORT

■ **Bus Services: Disability**

Stephen Twigg:

[\[4246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to his Department's consultation entitled Bus Services Act 2017: accessible information, which closed on 16 September 2018; and what his Department's timetable is to bring forward legislative proposals to require bus operators to provide audible and visible information on local bus services.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Government understands the importance of accessible on-board information in helping bus passengers to travel with confidence, and in Summer 2018 published a public consultation on proposals to require its provision on local bus services throughout Great Britain.

We continue to analyse responses to the consultation and expect to announce our next steps regarding the making of Regulations and publication of guidance later in the year.

■ **Electric Vehicles: St Helens**

Conor McGinn:

[\[6439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2019 to Question 1062 on Electric Vehicles: Charging Points, what grant funding his Department has allocated to St Helens Borough Council to increase the number of electric car charging points in that Borough.

George Freeman:

To date, drivers in the St Helens metropolitan borough have benefitted from grant funding for the installation of 125 domestic chargepoints, under the electric vehicle home charge scheme, and for the installation of 11 sockets, under the workplace charging scheme. Both of these schemes remain open for motorists of St Helens choosing zero emission vehicles.

St Helens metropolitan borough are also able to claim a grant towards the installation of chargepoints under the On-street Residential Charging Scheme; however as at this point in time, they have not yet made an application.

St Helens has also benefitted from the £4,701,629 awarded to Arriva and Merseytravel for 72 Biomethane, Electric and Hybrid buses, and £280,720 for accompanying charging infrastructure.

■ Motorways

Andy McDonald: [\[4401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will undertake an assessment of the (a) effectiveness and (b) safety of all-lane running on motorways.

George Freeman:

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State set out in the House on 24 October 2019 that he has asked the Department to carry out, at pace, an evidence stocktake to gather the facts about smart motorway safety.

■ Northern: Rolling Stock

Dan Jarvis: [\[R\] \[6388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans are in place to support Northern Rail in retiring all Pacer trains by the revised date of May 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Northern's Franchise Agreement stipulates that Pacers and other older types of trains cannot be removed until they can be replaced by another train into passenger service. This is to protect the stability of the rail timetable. Unfortunately, manufacturing delays with the new fleet have meant a small number of pacers will remain in service into 2020.

We will work alongside Northern to progress all options to remove Pacers as soon as possible however our top priority is to ensure a stable service for passengers.

■ Railway Stations: Access

Thelma Walker: [\[5087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria his Department uses to assess which train stations are eligible for disabled access upgrade.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Access for All programme provides accessibility improvements over and above those required by the industry. Stations are selected for this funding against a range of criteria including annual footfall, the incidence of disability in the area, and the availability of third party funding for the project. We also take into account local factors such as proximity to a hospital. Stations are also chosen to ensure a fair geographical spread of projects across the country.

Afzal Khan: [\[5105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether match-funding was a criterion for the value for money assessment of bids for 2018 Access for All programme funding.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Match funding was one of many factors that were considered. Other factors considered included annual footfall, the incidence of disability in the area, the availability of third party funding for the project and local factors such as proximity to a hospital.

Afzal Khan: [\[5106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the successful nominations to the 2018 Access for All Programme had undertaken an Option Selection Assessment (GRIP 2-3); and what assessment he has made of the level of support for each of those nominations from local stakeholders.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The level of development of a scheme was considered as was the level of support from stakeholders. For example, stations that had support from the train operating company were considered more favourably, as this makes a big difference in getting projects completed. However, many other factors were also considered including, annual footfall, the incidence of disability in the area, and the availability of third party funding for the project. We also took into account local factors such as proximity to a hospital. Stations were also chosen to ensure a fair geographical spread of projects across the country.

Afzal Khan: [\[5107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many of the successful nominations to the 2018 Access for All programme had not undertaken an Option Selection Assessment (GRIP 2-3).

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

More than half of the new stations selected were at GRIP 2 or higher. However, this was only one of many factors that were considered. Other factors considered included annual footfall, the incidence of disability in the area, the availability of third party funding for the project, and local factors such as proximity to a hospital.

Afzal Khan: [\[5108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether priority was given to bids to the 2018 Access for All programme from local authorities.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

We advised that that we expected the views of local authorities and other stakeholders to have been sought when making a nomination. However, this was only one of many factors considered. Other factors included annual footfall, the incidence of disability in the area, and the availability of third party funding for the project. We also took into account local factors such as proximity to a hospital. Stations were also chosen to ensure a fair geographical spread of projects across the country.

■ Railways: Compensation**Dan Jarvis:****[R] [6387]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to pay compensation to passengers on Pacer trains up to May 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The rail industry has no scheme whereby passengers are compensated on the basis of the quality of rolling stock provided for each journey they undertake. Northern's new trains will replace the Pacer fleet and the first was retired in August. Northern plans to remove two thirds of its 102 Pacers by December 2019.

■ Railways: Tickets**Andy McDonald:****[4332]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the letter of 11 October 2019 from the Minister of State for Transport to the Rail industry on smart ticketing, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of (a) the levers available to train operators to bring forward smart ticketing and (b) the role of Government in delivering that agenda.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We want train companies to deliver a modern, convenient, accessible and integrated smart ticketing system for their passengers. In recent years, the Government has worked jointly with the rail industry, including investing a further £80m in smart ticketing, to ensure that passengers have the choice of travelling without a paper ticket across almost all of the rail network.

We are now encouraging operators to build on the recent promotion campaign, encourage smart ticketing at the point of ticket purchase, and ensure that they deliver an excellent user experience.

■ Railways: Weather**Mr Jim Cunningham:****[6185]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve rail infrastructure to ensure that services are not cancelled during adverse weather.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We are spending a record £48 billion on the railway over Control Period 6 with a focus on making Britain's railway more reliable and focused on passengers' needs. The plans cover the five years from 1 April 2019. This represents a 17% increase in renewals spend from CP5 which will help cut delays caused by infrastructure failures, such as track defects.

This will allow Network Rail to be prepared for extreme weather and plan ahead to effectively minimise disruption. This will be achieved through a range of actions, including performing drainage work to reduce flood risk and working with specialist forecasters to keep Network Rail informed of severe weather risks and allow controllers to act.

■ Railways: West Midlands

Mr Jim Cunningham:

[\[6186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of delays to train services in the West Midlands.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department meets regularly with West Midlands Trains to discuss, amongst other issues, train performance. In addition, we have recently required the franchise to deliver a plan to improve train performance. We anticipate receiving this plan by the end of November and this will detail how performance will improve and return to the levels required under the Franchise Agreement.

■ South Western Railway: Standards

Mr Bob Seely:

[\[4354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average speed was of South Western Railway trains operating between (a) London and Portsmouth and (b) Southampton and Woking in the last 12 months.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department does not hold this information. However, my Hon. Friend may wish to contact South Western Railway and Network Rail, who may be able to provide him with the data he requires.

■ Trains

Mr Damian Hinds:

[\[4304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of (a) rail journeys and (b) passenger miles were undertaken in (i) electric powered and (ii) diesel powered trains in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what estimate he has made of those proportions in (A) one and (B) five years' time.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Information on the number of journeys or passenger miles by power source of the vehicle is not available.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) publishes data on the electrified rail route operated by Network Rail in Great Britain. This includes routes open to passengers and freight.

The length of Network Rail operated electrified route in Great Britain (so excluding the High Speed 1 line, for example) was 3,583 miles in 2017-18. This represents 36% of the total Network Rail mainline railway route.

This data is available at the following link:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/displayreport/report/html/c35e0c28-324f-4168-81b9-be197963f251>

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Bridget Phillipson:

[6348]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the University of Sheffield's October 2019 report entitled Modelling the impact of alcohol duty policies since 2012 in England & Scotland, what assessment his Department has made of the correlation between the (a) reduction in alcohol duty and (b) rise in alcohol-related deaths since 2012.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Treasury has not made an assessment of the correlation between alcohol duty and alcohol related deaths.

All taxes are kept under review and the impact of a change to alcohol duty is considered at each fiscal event, including its effect on jobs and the wider economy. HMRC publishes a Tax Information Impact Note explaining the impact of the change, each time a duty rate is amended. Please refer to the GOV.UK website to find these.

■ Automated Credit Transfer: Fraud

Peter Grant:

[6445]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support people experiencing bank transfer fraud.

John Glen:

The Government takes bank transfer fraud, often known as Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams, extremely seriously.

The Payment Systems Regulator, which was set up by the Government in 2015, established a steering group of financial institutions and consumer representatives to develop a voluntary industry Code of good practice to help protect consumers against these kinds of scam.

At the end of February 2019, the steering group published the Code, which sets out the agreed principles for greater protection of consumers and the circumstances in which they will be reimbursed, marking a significant step in delivering improved protections for customers.

The Code became effective on 28 May 2019 and customers of those payment service providers that are signatories are protected under the Code from this date.

■ Bank Services: Post Office

Jane Dodds:

[\[6518\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Lloyds Bank, (b) HSBC, and (c) RBS on their continued commitment to the banking framework with the Post Office.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with many organisations in the public and private sectors on a variety of issues.

The Government had limited engagement with all parties during negotiation of the Banking Framework, to ensure they were given the appropriate commercial freedom to negotiate the contract.

Post Office Limited announced in the Spring that renegotiated commercial terms and service enhancements for the Banking Framework had been agreed, and will take effect from January 2020 until January 2023. All 28 banks who were part of the original Banking Framework have signed up to the renegotiated agreement, which will see a significant increase to the overall fees received by Post Office Limited from the banks.

Barclays initially made the decision to uniquely opt out of cash withdrawal services at post offices through the renegotiated Banking Framework agreement, but they have since reversed this decision. The Government welcomes this renegotiated 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.

■ Coinage

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[6494\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has received representations on minting a coin with a date different from 31 October 2019 to commemorate the UK leaving the EU.

John Glen:

The Royal Mint has a long-established tradition of producing coins in order to commemorate historic moments, including the 2012 Olympics, the UK's accession to the European Economic Community, and the centenary of the First World War. The commemorative 50p to mark the UK leaving the European Union will be made available following the UK's departure.

■ Economic Situation

Caroline Lucas: [\[6335\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his letter of 21 October 2019 to the Interim Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, what recent assessment he has made of the potential economic merits of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

Rishi Sunak:

On Monday 21st October, the government published an Impact Assessment in support of the WAB. It is a standard assessment of the direct costs and benefits to businesses of the elements of the Bill. This can be found on gov.ukhere.

The specifics of our future trading relationship with the EU will be the subject of the next phase of the negotiations.

We will keep Parliament updated throughout the next phase of the negotiations and provide analysis at appropriate points.

The OBR will, of course, continue to take Government policy – including the UK's future relationship with the EU – as the basis for its economic and fiscal forecasts, and will provide its usual comprehensive analysis as part of these.

■ Financial Services: International Cooperation

Mr Steve Baker: [\[5016\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to establish a new global platform agreement for financial services.

John Glen:

The UK has extensive global financial services ties with both leading advanced markets and emerging markets. When we leave the EU, we will have new tools at our disposal, which we will take advantage of to enhance our key financial services relationships. These include the chance to forge deep bilateral regulatory agreements based on equivalence and mutual recognition, and the opportunity to negotiate on financial services in Free Trade Agreements. We will also continue to use existing tools, such as engagement in the international standard setting bodies.

■ Freezing of Assets: Yemen

Keith Vaz: [\[6195\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Yemeni institutions and individuals have funds frozen in the Bank of England.

Keith Vaz: [\[6196\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of funds frozen of Yemeni institutions and individuals in the Bank of England.

John Glen:

Responsibility for the implementation of financial sanctions transferred from the Bank of England to Her Majesty's Treasury in 2007. The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), which is part of HM Treasury, ensures that financial sanctions are properly understood and implemented in the UK. It is for holders of assets subject to sanctions to ensure that they are frozen under the regulations.

The Yemen sanctions regime imposes an asset freeze against five individuals. Details of the Yemen regime, including the designated persons, can be publicly accessed on GOV.UK at the following web address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-sanctions-yemen>.

OFSI undertakes an Annual Review of frozen assets in the UK, requiring all persons or institutions that hold or control frozen assets in the UK to report to OFSI. As of 28 September 2018, the value of frozen funds associated with designated persons on the Yemen regime was some £3,500,000 (see OFSI Annual Review 2018 – 2019, available at: <https://gov.uk/ofsi>.) HM Treasury does not provide a breakdown of the value of frozen assets held by certain individuals or entities, nor does it provide detailed information of frozen assets associated with specific designated persons.

■ Housing: Insulation**Sir Graham Brady:****[6225]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to exempt homeowners seeking to sell a property but who are unable to do so until unsafe cladding has been removed from the 3 per cent second home surcharge on the purchase of another property.

Jesse Norman:

In designing the Higher Rates, the Government consulted on how best to ensure that the higher rates did not affect people moving from one main residence to another, where they disposed of the previous main residence.

The final legislation therefore ensures that where a household pays the Higher Rates but sells their previous main residence within 36 months, they will be eligible for a refund.

The Government has committed £600 million to fund the removal and replacement of unsafe aluminium composite material cladding on both social and private sector residential buildings.

■ Taxation: Electronic Government**Caroline Nokes:****[4989]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessments were undertaken on the negative effects on smaller, rural businesses of Making Tax Digital.

Jesse Norman:

By 24 October 2019 over 1.25 million businesses had joined the new MTD service and over 1.75 million VAT returns had been successfully submitted using MTD-compatible software.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have worked with and taken feedback from stakeholders including Defra and the National Farmers' Union, to help shape the design and to understand the impact of the MTD service. An assessment of the impact on smaller, rural businesses is included within the wider Impact Assessment.

Broadband connectivity was presented as a particular challenge for some rural communities. The Government has committed more than £1 billion for the next generation of digital infrastructure, with the Chancellor recently announcing a £5 billion commitment to fund gigabit-capable (speeds of 1,000Mbps+) deployment in the hardest to reach 20% of UK premises. This will close the digital divide and ensure rural areas are not left behind.

Those that cannot go digital are already not required to join MTD.

■ Unpaid Work**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:****[6442]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints HMRC has received on employers advertising unpaid work trials in the last 12 months.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is determined that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) receives it.

All businesses, irrespective of size or business sector, are responsible for paying the correct minimum wage to their staff.

HMRC do not record numbers of complaints relating specifically to unpaid work trials.

HMRC take seriously and review all complaints from workers; and if anyone thinks they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can contact Acas, in confidence, on 0300 123 1100 or submit a query online using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pay-and-work-rights-complaints>.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Equality****Caroline Lucas:****[5427]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Equality Act 2010, what assessment she has made of the effect of leaving the EU on people in the UK in respect of (a) age, (b) disability, (c) gender reassignment, (d) pregnancy and maternity, (e) race, (f) religion or belief (g) sex and (h) sexual orientation; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to retaining all the protections in the Equality Act 2010 and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland, when we leave the EU, so our leaving will have no effect on protections against discrimination, harassment or victimisation in relation to any of the protected characteristics listed in the Question.

Caroline Lucas:[\[5428\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Equality Act 2010, what records the Government holds on the potential effect on equalities of (a) the UK leaving the EU without a deal (b) the right hon. Member for Maidenhead's proposed deal and (c) the Prime Minister's proposed deal.

Victoria Atkins:

When we leave the EU, all EU equality law which has already been transposed into the domestic statute book and consolidated into the Equality Act 2010 will be preserved as EU-derived domestic legislation under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018. The Government is committed to retain all the protections in the Equality Act 2010 and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland. This applies irrespective of whether the UK leaves with either of the deals mentioned in the Question, or without a deal.

■ Males: Research**Mrs Maria Miller:**[\[4951\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to publish research commissioned into the stereotypical expectations of men and boys announced on 19 November 2018.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government Equalities Office will publish research on engaging men and boys on gender expectations, attitudes and behaviours early next year as planned.

■ Period Poverty**Christian Matheson:**[\[5037\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what progress has been made by the joint taskforce on period poverty on bringing together (a) public, (b) private and (c) third sector organisations to tackle period poverty.

Victoria Atkins:

The Period Poverty Taskforce has made excellent progress in bringing together organisations such as the PSHE Association from the public sector, the phs group from the private sector, Bloody Good Period from the third sector and other experts to tackle period poverty in the UK. The Taskforce and its composite workstreams have met twice and begun to identify: access barriers and the groups that are most affected by them; a programme of work to tackle stigma and shame surrounding menstruation; and research priorities to improve the evidence surrounding period poverty and menstrual stigma in the UK.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment Schemes

Margaret Greenwood: [\[6405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are participating in (a) the Work Programme and (b) Work Choice; and on what date the final participants will complete those programmes.

Mims Davies:

Statistics on the Work Programme, including information on starts, referrals and job outcomes is published and available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/work-programme-statistics--2>

Statistics on the Work Choice programme, including information on starts, referrals and job outcomes is published and available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/work-choice-statistics-number-of-starts-and-referrals--2>

■ Maternity Allowance

Frank Field: [\[5404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 October to Question 2694 on Maternity Allowance, on what date her Department's messaging changed; and what the estimated number of days was in relation to that change.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 30 October 2019]: From 15 October 19 all Enquiry Line greeting messages, Gov.uk and SMS messages were aligned to notify customers that the working day turn around for MA claims was 70 days. This estimate reflected potential concerns that processing times could increase still further – which did not ultimately prove to be the case. In light of this we are reviewing our messaging to ensure our actual processing times are correctly reflected.

SMS texts only go to those customers that provide mobile contact numbers and are automated from the mail opening unit on receipt of the claim form.

■ Universal Credit

Frank Field: [\[6230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many alternative payment arrangements for fortnightly payment of universal credit were (a) requested, (b) rejected and (c) accepted in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

The Department is unable to provide data relating to (a) requested and (b) rejected alternative payment arrangements for fortnightly payment of Universal Credit as the

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

In response to part (c), the available information on the number of households on Universal Credit that receive More Frequent Payments or Scottish Choices More Frequent Payments is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Notes:

1. Statistics are based on whether a household has actually been paid a More Frequent Payment.
2. Data will not include households that had a More Frequent Payment set up but were not actually paid more frequently, for instance because they cancelled the More Frequent Payment before they were paid.

Frank Field:

[6231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many alternative payment arrangements for weekly payment of universal credit were (a) requested, (b) rejected and (c) accepted in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

The Department is unable to provide data relating to (a) requested and (b) rejected alternative payment arrangements for weekly payment of Universal Credit as the information is not readily available, and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

In response to part (c), the available information on the number of households on Universal Credit that receive More Frequent Payments or Scottish Choices More Frequent Payments is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Frank Field:

[6232]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many alternative payment arrangements have been arranged with universal credit claimants; and what the reasons were for those arrangements in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

Statistics on the number of Households on Universal Credit that make use of a Managed Payment to Landlord, More Frequent Payment and Split Payments under Alternative Payment Arrangements is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Information regarding the reasons for the alternative payment arrangements is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Frank Field:**[6235]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what reasons have been given by her Department for rejecting alternative payment arrangement requests for universal credit in the most recent 12 month period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

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

Nic Dakin:**[6354]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is available to parents who are returning to work from parental leave who have to pay childcare costs upfront and get reimbursed in arrears under universal credit.

Nic Dakin:**[6355]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to provide the childcare element of universal credit to eligible parents before they pay high childcare costs without any support; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

The Government is committed to supporting parents with moving into work and, as part of this, we increased the level of support for childcare costs from 70 per cent in legacy benefits to up to 85 per cent in Universal Credit (UC). The UC childcare policy aligns with the wider government childcare offer, which includes free childcare hours and tax free childcare and UC claimants can utilise both the free childcare entitlement and UC childcare costs in conjunction with each other for relevant hours. This offer means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work.

The UC childcare policy aligns with the wider government childcare offer, which includes free childcare hours and tax free childcare and UC claimants can utilise both the free childcare entitlement and UC childcare costs in conjunction with each other for relevant hours. This offer means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work.

Beyond the UC childcare element, claimants can be considered for two additional methods of funding childcare costs: the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) and Budgeting Advances.

Work Coaches can support individual claimants with barriers that may prevent them from moving into employment. Each case is considered carefully on its own merits with financial help available to eligible claimants in advance for childcare. Where agreed, FSF will pay 100% of the upfront childcare costs up to the payment limits set that the claimant incurs between starting work and receiving their first wage.

A budgeting advance is available for one-off urgent financial events for eligible UC claimants, such as upfront childcare, and is repayable over a period of up to 12 monthly instalments. Only one Budgeting Advance will be paid at a time and further advances will be unavailable until the balance of the previous Budgeting Advance is cleared.

Dan Jarvis: [\[6389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to change the calculation of universal credit payments to take account of when earnings are scheduled to be paid to claimants rather than when they are received by claimants.

Will Quince:

Employers should already record on HMRC's Real Time Information (RTI) system the date a salary is scheduled to be paid, rather than the date it is paid, where it is earlier due to a weekend, bank holiday or at Christmas.

Universal Credit takes earnings into account in a way that is fair and transparent. The amount of Universal Credit paid reflects, as closely as possible, the actual circumstances of a household during each monthly assessment period, including any earnings reported by the employer during the assessment period, regardless of when they were paid, or which month they relate to.

Assessment periods allow for Universal Credit awards to be adjusted on a monthly basis, ensuring that if claimants' incomes fall, they do not have to wait several months for a rise in their Universal Credit award.

Claimants can discuss queries about how fluctuating income effects Universal Credit with their case managers and work coaches, who can also signpost to services appropriate to individual circumstances.

Ruth George: [\[6503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to provide an update on the universal credit managed migration pilot that began in Harrogate in July 2019.

Will Quince:

We have commenced our Move to Universal Credit pilot, as scheduled, in the area served by Harrogate Jobcentre. The goal of the pilot is to learn as much as possible, and to increase numbers as slowly and gradually as necessary.

Testing the system and our processes will allow us to make sure we can provide the best possible service to those claimants who move to Universal Credit from their legacy claims.

The Department has already committed to updating the House when appropriate progress has been made.

Ruth George:

[6504]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department has spent on payments of universal credit advances to claimants in each month since advances were introduced.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is now the main system of working age welfare support across the country. It is available in every Jobcentre, with a caseload of over 2.5 million claimants, growing every month, now able to access the additional support and flexibilities it offers.

Around 60 per cent of new claims take up an advance. Subject to some fluctuation, this rate of advance take-up has been broadly consistent over the last 12 months. As the overall Universal Credit caseload grows, we expect the volume and value of advance payments to change in correlation. This shows that claimants are being made aware of advances and are using it where they need this help.

Information surrounding the amount spent on Universal Credit advances each month since they were introduced is shown in the table below:

JUN-13	£1,000
Jul-13	£2,000
Aug-13	£3,000
Sep-13	£10,000
Oct-13	£10,000
Nov-13	£18,000
Dec-13	£18,000
Jan-14	£25,000
Feb-14	£30,000
Mar-14	£47,000
Apr-14	£42,000
May-14	£36,000
Jun-14	£34,000

JUN-13	£1,000
Jul-14	£33,000
Aug-14	£48,000
Sep-14	£133,000
Oct-14	£153,000
Nov-14	£203,000
Dec-14	£278,000
Jan-15	£360,000
Feb-15	£371,000
Mar-15	£607,000
Apr-15	£574,000
May-15	£1,050,000
Jun-15	£1,061,000
Jul-15	£1,261,000
Aug-15	£1,605,000
Sep-15	£1,786,000
Oct-15	£1,762,000
Nov-15	£2,081,000
Dec-15	£2,171,000
Jan-16	£2,736,000
Feb-16	£2,642,000
Mar-16	£4,080,000
Apr-16	£3,801,000
May-16	£3,996,000
Jun-16	£3,827,000
Jul-16	£4,438,000
Aug-16	£4,629,000

JUN-13	£1,000
Sep-16	£4,817,000
Oct-16	£4,801,000
Nov-16	£4,879,000
Dec-16	£5,452,000
Jan-17	£6,062,000
Feb-17	£5,601,000
Mar-17	£7,876,000
Apr-17	£6,847,000
May-17	£7,051,000
Jun-17	£6,873,000
Jul-17	£7,367,000
Aug-17	£8,002,000
Sep-17	£8,396,000
Oct-17	£9,363,000
Nov-17	£12,130,000
Dec-17	£13,254,000
Jan-18	£25,685,000
Feb-18	£24,977,000
Mar-18	£25,721,000
Apr-18	£25,934,000
May-18	£28,812,000
Jun-18	£32,678,000
Jul-18	£43,321,000
Aug-18	£46,636,000
Sep-18	£44,778,000
Oct-18	£55,693,000

JUN-13	£1,000
Nov-18	£62,991,000
Dec-18	£58,697,000
Jan-19	£75,758,000
Feb-19	£79,955,000
Mar-19	£91,646,000
Apr-19	£91,957,000
May-19	£103,096,000

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest £1000.
2. Figures go up to May 2019 in line with published statistics relating to households on Universal Credit.
3. Figures include all types of advances.
4. Figures prior to April 2019 include hardship payments made under Universal Credit live service.

Ruth George:[\[6505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claimants with children are not eligible for a budgeting advance to pay for upfront childcare costs due to (a) an existing budgeting advance, (b) not having made a debt repayment and (b) not claiming universal credit for a sufficient amount of time in the most recent period for which data is available.

Mims Davies:

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

Laura Pidcock:[\[6508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to publish easy-to-read guidance on making a non-digital claim for universal credit.

Laura Pidcock:[\[6509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will consult (a) welfare rights advisers and (b) professionals with experience of supporting people with complex needs on drafting guidance on making a non-digital claim for universal credit.

Will Quince:

The Department makes use of a range of channels to increase understanding of Universal Credit through social media and wider advertising. This includes

signposting to sources of information which are written in an 'easy-to-read' format to help people make decisions on whether Universal Credit is appropriate for their circumstances.

We publish information in two key locations to help improve awareness of, and how to claim Universal Credit, which can be found at the following websites:

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/making-a-claim/before-you-claim/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-detailed-information-for-claimants>

If a person wishes to claim Universal Credit but requires assistance, they are clearly directed to either the Help to Claim service, or to the Universal Credit telephone helpline. Both can be useful to anyone who cannot use digital services.

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland have been delivering the 'Help to Claim' service on a pilot basis since April 2019. The Citizens Advice Help to Claim service offers tailored, practical support from helping people make a Universal Credit claim up to receiving their first full correct payment on time. This service is available online, on the phone and face-to-face through local Citizen's Advice services.

We regularly engage with a range of stakeholders, including welfare rights organisations, to ensure we gather and understand a diverse range of opinions, which helps us to design improvements to Universal Credit.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Government Update

Minister for the Constitution (Chloe Smith):

[\[HCWS65\]](#)

The Prime Minister will write to ministerial colleagues shortly providing guidance on the conduct of government business during the pre-election period. The Cabinet Secretary will also issue guidance to civil servants on their conduct during this period.

DEFENCE

■ Ministry of Defence - Update

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS62\]](#)

The first duty of any Government is to defend our country and to keep our people safe. The Ministry of Defence plays a pivotal role in delivering our national security objectives to protect our people, project our influence and promote our prosperity. This Government has increased the Defence budget by 0.5% above inflation every year to over £41 billion by 2020/21, making us the biggest defence spender in Europe and the second biggest in NATO. The UK is the second largest defence exporter in the world, selling equipment worth £14bn last year and supporting more than 260,000 British jobs. We are investing an extra £2.2Bn into defence over this year and next to ensure the UK's world-class Armed Forces can continue to modernise, meet ever-changing threats and continue to protect the country's national security. This includes prioritising key capabilities such as cyber, shipbuilding and the nuclear deterrent.

Operations

- The UK Armed Forces are deployed around the world 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- In 2019 alone we have marked 50 years of Continuous At Sea Deterrence, increased the number of Armed Forces personnel in Afghanistan from 650 to around 1,100, delivered over 400 bespoke training activities in the Middle East and North Africa, and provided Military Aid to the Civil Authorities on over 120 occasions.
- British forces made the second largest overall contribution to the fight against Daesh after the US. We lead a 1000 strong force (c.800 from UK plus troops from France and Denmark) to undertake NATO Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia, and UK Typhoon aircraft have recently completed an air policing deployment in the Baltic Sea region (2019).
- We have delivered on our commitment to double the number of military personnel involved in UN peacekeeping, following deployments to Somalia and South Sudan,

and increased our presence in the Gulf (Dubai), Asia-Pacific (Singapore) and West Africa (Abuja) to provide a focal point for defence activity. In 2018 we opened the first overseas Navy base in 50 years in Bahrain.

- In both 2017 and 2019, the UK provided military support for humanitarian and disaster relief to the Caribbean Islands left devastated by natural disasters, Hurricane Irma (Op RUMAN) and Hurricane Dorian (Op BARYTONE). This year, in the Caribbean and Atlantic, the RFA have seized or disrupted 1.4 metric tonnes of cocaine and cannabis, worth over £45 million.

People

- We are working to strengthen the support we give to our serving personnel, veterans and their families.
- More than 4,000 organisations have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and the new Office for Veterans' Affairs will ensure the UK leads the world in care for Armed Forces Veterans.
- We have launched the first ever UK-wide strategy on the delivery of support for veterans, including a new ID card for veterans, which will help them access specialist support and services.
- The Flexible Working Act was passed enabling Service personnel to request Restricted Separation and or part-time working to enable them to balance their personal commitments with Defence, helping to improve retention. We have also doubled the operational allowance for deployed Military personnel and are currently investing a further £123 million, as a minimum, this financial year to improve Service Family Accommodation in the UK.
- We have made £280 million in payments to more than 18K applicants so far through the Forces Help to Buy scheme and allocated over £230 million from LIBOR fines for the Armed Forces community.
- We achieved the target of enrolling 50,000 apprentices in the MOD, 16 months ahead of the target date.
- We are based across the United Kingdom, and through our industrial contracts and bases we support 10,000 jobs in Scotland and more than 6,000 in Wales.
- We have met our target of Cadet expansion programme of 500 cadet units parading ahead of time.

Equipment

- We will spend £186 billion on equipment and equipment support between 2018 and 2028.
- The Army have signed major equipment support contracts including a £439 million contract for Apache helicopter support and funded a demonstration phase to upgrade Warrior vehicles.

- We have placed a £4.5 billion contract, including in-service support until 2024, to purchase 589 AJAX vehicles.
- This month [October], UK F-35 Lightning jets landed and took off from HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH for the first time, as part of the preparations for the Carrier Strike Group deployment in 2021. Her sister ship, HMS PRINCE OF WALES, is conducting sea trials and will be commissioned later this year.
- In 2019 we took delivery of additional F-35B aircraft, bringing the total to 18, and placed order for more to be delivered between 2020 – 2022. British F-35Bs completed their first operational missions this year.
- We have taken delivery of our final Typhoon aircraft (taking the current fleet to 157) and have continued to grow the UKs A400M transport aircraft fleet.
- This year we have announced our intent to procure five E7 Airborne Early Warning aircraft and in recent years we have secured deals to provide nine P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft and 50 Apache AH-64E aircraft through a Foreign Military Sales agreement with the US Government.
- The first steel has been cut for the second ship in the Royal Navy's next generation of Type 26 anti-submarine frigates; the first ship, HMS GLASGOW, will enter service in 2027. Australia and Canada have committed to purchase the design.
- All four of the TIDE class tankers have been delivered whilst HMS MEDWAY, the second of five new offshore patrol vessels, has been accepted into the Fleet.
- Building on the success of the RAF's first ever satellite, Carbonite-II, we have joined the U.S. Combined Space Operations Centre in California. An RAF pilot has been seconded to Virgin Orbit.

INDUSTRY

- The UK continues to play an ambitious and trailblazing role on the global stage, designing, developing and rapidly procuring state-of-the-art equipment that ensures our Armed Forces are fit for the future.
- The defence industry champions British manufacturing, pushes the boundaries of technology and delivers unique export opportunities across the world to protect not just the UK, but our allies too.
- As a thriving national sector with a truly global reach, the work of defence underpins the Government's industrial and economic strategies and continues to drive British innovation on the international stage.
- The DSEI exhibition showcases every two years the very best of British ingenuity, innovation and industry on the international stage, demonstrating how Global Britain continues to be a world leader in technology and defence.
- Built on more than 400 years of excellence and innovation, we consistently push the possibilities to the limit, developing and exporting battle-winning capabilities that redefine the defence landscape.

- We are constantly sharpening our cutting-edge capabilities, exploring and procuring the very best technology to ensure we continue to outpace adversaries for generations to come.
- The UK alone injects nearly £20bn into our national defence industry every year, almost £300 for every person in the country, making defence spending a powerhouse behind the UK economy, driving export orders and future-proofing the industry for generations to come.
- We are implementing the National Shipbuilding Strategy to transform the procurement of naval ships, make the UK's maritime industry more competitive, grow the Royal Navy fleet by the 2030s, export British ships overseas, and boost innovation, skills, jobs, and productivity across the UK.
- Built on the foundations of a thriving UK defence sector that continues to turbocharge regional economies, a consortia led by Babcock, in partnership with the Thales Group, has been selected as the preferred bidder for the Type 31 general purpose frigates procurement process reinforcing international partnerships, building security co-operation and strengthening our influence across the world.
- We have invested over £40 million in developing a new Cyber Security Operations Capability.
- Investing £48 million to deliver a new state of the art Chemical Weapons Defence Centre at Dstl Porton Down.
- We have published the Combat Air Strategy to strengthen the UK's role as a global leader in the sector and to protect key skills across the UK industrial base. Team Tempest will bring together the UK's world leading industry and sovereign capabilities across future combat air's four key technology areas.
- We have opened the £83 million state of the art Defence Fulfilment Centre at Donnington, Shropshire, operated through the MOD's partnership with Team Leidos to transform Defence logistics.
- The Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Action Plan was published this year, and the Defence and Security Accelerator has allocated over £36 million to over 200 proposals.
- We have secured a £6 billion Qatari deal to purchase 24 Typhoon and 9 Hawk aircraft from the UK.
- As our exports orders climb, our supply chains continue to reinforce our regional economies, supporting highly skilled jobs and training apprentices to be the future of our pioneering UK defence sector.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Designation of the Statement of Strategic Priorities for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum, and postal services.**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Nicky Morgan):
[\[HCWS59\]](#)

I wish to inform members that I have designated the Government's Statement of Strategic Priorities for telecommunications, the management of radio spectrum, and postal services, for the purposes of section 2A of the Communications Act 2003.

The Statement sets out the Government's strategic priorities and desired outcomes in a number of areas, including the deployment of nationwide gigabit-capable broadband as soon as possible, high quality mobile coverage where people live, work and travel, the paramount importance of the security and resilience of telecoms networks, and furthering the interests of telecoms consumers.

The statement was laid before Parliament on 18 July 2019 and the statutory period required under section 2C of the Act has now ended. Ofcom is required to have regard to the statement when carrying out its relevant functions and must explain in writing what it proposes to do in consequence of the statement within 40 days, in accordance with section 2B of the Act. Ofcom is thereafter required to publish annual reviews of what they have done in consequence of the statement.

EDUCATION**■ Early Education Update**

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb): [\[HCWS56\]](#)

Today I am confirming the final hourly funding rates for the free early education entitlements in 2020-21. In total we are planning to spend more than £3.6 billion in 2020-21 to support nurseries and childminders in England to deliver high quality care and education.

As a result of the additional funding announced by the Chancellor at the Spending Round for Early Years, we will increase the hourly funding rates for all local authorities for the two year old entitlement by 8p an hour. Funding for the three and four year old entitlement will also increase by 8p an hour in the vast majority of areas. We are increasing the minimum funding floor for the three and four year old offer to £4.38p.

Thirteen councils have had their 2019-20 hourly funding rates for 3 and 4 year olds protected by the "loss cap" in the Early Years National Funding Formula, to ensure that they do not face large drops to their funding rate. Funding for all these councils will be maintained in 2020-21. Loss cap areas are: Bradford, Bristol, Camden, Derbyshire, Ealing, Halton, Islington, Lambeth, Rutland, Southwark, Sunderland, Tower Hamlets, and Westminster.

I can also confirm today that supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS) will continue, at its current rate, for the whole of the 2020-21 financial year. I can also confirm that the government remains committed to funding for MNS in the longer term; and that any reform to the way they are funded in future will be accompanied with funding protections.

Further details and guidance will be published on GOV.UK

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Departmental Update

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Theresa Villiers):
[\[HCWS63\]](#)

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Hong Kong Six Monthly Report

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab):
[\[HCWS53\]](#)

The latest six-monthly report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2019. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office). I commend the report to the House.

Attachments:

1. Hong Kong Six Monthly Report [Hong Kong Six-monthly Report.pdf]

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Extension of legal rights to personal health budgets

Minister of State for Care (Caroline Dinéage): [\[HCWS54\]](#)

Today, and following consultation, I am pleased to announce that I am laying legislation that will extend the legal right to have a personal health budget to a further two groups. These groups are:

- People eligible for Section 117 aftercare services; and
- People who access wheelchair services, whose posture and mobility needs impact their wider health and social care needs.

The evidence base for personalised care demonstrates a positive impact on people, professionals and the system. It has shown to produce better outcomes and experiences, improving individual's quality of life, whilst reducing health inequalities. It has also

demonstrated the ability to reduce pressures on the system- people who are more confident and able to manage their health conditions have 18% fewer GP contacts, and 38% fewer emergency admissions than people with the least confidence.

That is why the provision of personalised care was a central component of the NHS Long-Term Plan, with the intention of making personalised care, business as usual. This means reaching 2.5m people by 2023/24, doubling that within the decade.

Significant progress has already been made. Over 70,000 people now have a personal health budget; nearly a 300% increase compared to the same time two years ago.

Universal Personalised Care [1] has also recently been published, setting out the 21 actions that together we will take in the coming years.

Personal health budgets are integral to delivering personalised care, and this extension marks an important step in delivering our ambition. We will continue to explore the feasibility of further extension and consult in due course.

Timing

The consultation on extending the right to have a personal health budget was concluded on 8th June 2018 and the consultation response published on 21st February 2019. The changes to the regulations are being made at the earliest opportunity to bring about these positive impacts as soon as possible and will come into force on the 2nd of December, rather than awaiting a common commencement date.

[1] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/universal-personalised-care.pdf>

HOME OFFICE

■ G6 Munich

The Minister of State for Security and Deputy for EU Exit and No Deal Preparation (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS60\]](#)

My Noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The informal G6 group of Interior Ministers held its most recent meeting in Munich on 28 and 29 October 2019. Representatives from the USA, the European Commission, Interpol and the World Jewish Congress also attended the meeting.

The summit was chaired by the German Interior Minister, Horst Seehofer. I represented the United Kingdom. The other participating States were represented by Sylwester Tulajew (Deputy Minister of the Interior, Poland), Christophe Castaner (Minister of the Interior, France), Luciana Lamorgese (Minister of the Interior, Italy) and Fernando Grande-Marlaska (Minister of the Interior, Spain).

The European Commission was represented by Dimitris Avramopoulos (Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship) and Sir Julian King (Commissioner for the Security Union). The United States was represented by a delegation led by David

Pekoske (Acting Deputy Secretary, US Department of Homeland Security). Interpol was represented by Jürgen Stock (Secretary General) and the World Jewish Congress was represented by their President, Ronald Lauder. The European Commission joined all of the plenary sessions.

The first plenary session was on migration and asylum and focussed on the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Given the UK did not opt in to the CEAS package, my intervention focused on our commitment to finding sustainable solutions and the “whole of route” approach to migration. This includes increasing the efforts to tackle people trafficking and finding new ways to stop criminal gangs from operating. I highlighted the UK’s major contribution to resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees. I also updated the G6 on the recent tragic incident in Essex where 39 migrants lost their lives.

The second plenary session was on future cooperation with the UK where the discussion covered the mutual benefits of a close security partnership following the UK’s exit from the EU. I made the case for an ambitious UK-EU security partnership in line with the Political Declaration agreed between the UK and EU, which should exist alongside strengthened bilateral and other multilateral channels of cooperation with our G6 and wider international partners. Interpol joined this discussion. There was broad consensus amongst the G6 to seek a close and comprehensive future security partnership between the UK and EU to protect our citizens.

The day concluded with an informal working dinner, where discussion focused on the current situation in Syria, including the internally displaced persons and security implications. During the discussion I stressed the UK’s dedication to international security and that anything which risks the security of detention facilities threatens the security of us all.

At the third plenary session we were joined by the representatives of Interpol and the World Jewish Congress. Discussion focused on right-wing extremism and antisemitism. I set out the action the UK is taking domestically and internationally to tackle these issues, including in the online world.

The final plenary session covered terrorist content online and the security of 5G networks. I expressed our concern about the European Parliament’s position on the draft EU Regulation on tackling terrorist content online, and made the case that only by encouraging a proactive approach by online service providers will we secure a meaningful impact on the terrorist threat. I also set out the UK’s approach to ensuring a secure and resilient 5G network.

At the meeting it was confirmed that the UK will host the next G6 in 2020.

■ **Istanbul Convention Ratification: 2019 Report on Progress**

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safeguarding and Vulnerability (Victoria Atkins):

[\[HCWS58\]](#)

The Government has today laid before Parliament and published the third annual report on the United Kingdom’s progress toward the ratification of the Council of Europe

Convention on Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the “Istanbul Convention”). The UK signed the Istanbul Convention in 2012 to signal the UK’s strong commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and this Government remains committed to ratifying it.

The report sets out the steps taken by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations toward ratification of the Convention and the work that has been undertaken since the 2018 Report on Progress.

This year, we have continued to strengthen our efforts to combat VAWG. We have published a refreshed cross-Government VAWG Strategy to ensure that we are doing all that we can to tackle crimes which affect disproportionately women and girls. The refresh captures new programmes of work and sets out 54 new actions the Government has committed to take to drive forward this agenda, including the establishment of an end-to-end review into the criminal justice response to rape.

In most respects, the UK already complies with or goes further than the Convention requires. Since signing the Convention in 2012, we have significantly strengthened our laws and introduced a range of new tools and measures to protect victims. But we know that there is more to do. That is why in July this year we introduced a landmark Domestic Abuse Bill in Parliament, which followed a public consultation that attracted more than 3,200 responses. The Bill set out a package of measures to transform our response to domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Bill included the necessary legislative measures to ensure that the criminal law in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland satisfied the requirements of Article 44 of the Convention in respect of extra-territorial jurisdiction; the provisions in respect of Scotland and Northern Ireland were included at the request of the Scottish Government and Department of Justice. In addition, and again following a request earlier this year from the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland, the Bill also included a new domestic abuse offence for Northern Ireland which would enable Northern Ireland to be fully compliant with Article 33 (psychological violence). After the report went to print yesterday the Early Parliamentary General Election Bill completed its passage through Parliament, which means that the Domestic Abuse Bill will not continue in this Parliament. It remains the case that the drawing up of the legislation represents an important milestone in our progress towards compliance with Articles 44 and (in Northern Ireland) 33. The Government remains fully committed to ratifying the Convention and to taking the measures necessary to enable us to do so.

The issue of support for migrant victims of domestic abuse was raised by the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill in its report published in June this year. In response, the Government has committed to reviewing the overall response to migrant victims of domestic abuse, including by specifically considering the Committee’s recommendation to extend the period of time that support is offered for and how this relates to a victim’s ability to access refuge accommodation. As part of this review, we will also take into account any obligations we have under the Istanbul Convention. We have therefore recorded Articles 4(3) (to the extent that it relates to migrant and refugee status)

and 59 as 'under review' in the report this year to reflect that we are currently considering the Committee's concerns in greater detail.

The publication of this report fulfils the requirement of section 2 of the Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017. I will lay before Parliament the report required by section 1 of that Act when our timescale for ratification is clear.

Copies of the report will be available in the Vote Office and it will be published on the Government's website at GOV.UK.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Leasehold update

Minister of State for Housing (Esther McVey):

[\[HCWS55\]](#)

During the Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Westminster Hall Debate on 2 October, I pledged to setting out in full the actions the government is taking on leasehold and commonhold reform (Column 366WH).

The government is taking forward a comprehensive reform of leasehold and commonhold, so it is fairer for homeowners. We responded on 27 June 2019 to the technical consultation on leasehold reform which set out how our plans will work in practice. We will legislate to ensure that, in future, apart from in exceptional circumstances, all new houses will be sold on a freehold basis. We will also reduce ground rent to zero on new leases and will improve how leasehold properties are bought and sold by setting fixed time frames and maximum fees for the provision of leasehold information. We will implement these changes when Parliamentary time allows.

We are also working with the Law Commission to:

- standardise the enfranchisement process, so that buying a freehold or extending a lease can be made easier, quicker and more cost effective.
- review how Commonhold works, so that it is a viable alternative to leasehold for both existing and new homes.
- make it easier for leaseholders to obtain the Right to Manage, in both straightforward and complex developments.

The Law Commission will report back to government on options to reform the valuation process this autumn, and on all three projects in February 2020.

In March 2019, we launched an industry pledge which commits freeholders to identifying any lease with ground rent terms that double more frequently than every 20 years and contacting leaseholders to offer to amend the terms. The pledge has been signed by more than 60 leading developers, freeholders and managing agents. We will continue to monitor its effectiveness and take further action as necessary.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced in June 2019 that it will carry out an investigation into the mis-selling of leasehold properties. The CMA will use its

consumer protection powers to determine whether leasehold terms – including onerous ground rents and permission fees – can be classified as ‘unfair’. If the evidence merits it, the CMA will consider whether to bring forward enforcement proceedings. We look forward to receiving the outcome of this work.

We have also:

- made it easier for leaseholders to form Recognised Tenants’ Associations (RTAs). We will shortly be reviewing this legislation to see how effectively it is working in practice.
- worked with Trading Standards to improve information on accessing redress through the publishing of new guidance, which will help current leaseholders understand the redress process better.
- committed to implement most of the Law Commission recommendations in its 2017 *Event Fees in Retirement Properties* report. We will consider two recommendations (on succession rights and a database of leasehold retirement properties with event fees) further to determine the most effective way of improving the system for consumers.
- asked the Law Commission to update its 2006 report, *Termination of Tenancies for Tenant default*, so that we can consider next steps on the law of forfeiture.
- committed to introducing legislation to extend mandatory membership of a redress scheme to all freeholders of leasehold properties.
- set out our intention to give freehold homeowners the same rights as leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate maintenance fees, and to apply to the tribunal to appoint a new manager.
- committed to ensuring homeowners cannot be subject to a mandatory possession order for minor ground rent or rentcharge arrears.
- announced in March 2019 that we will address the issue of legal costs. We believe leaseholders should not be subject to unjustified legal costs and will close the legal loopholes that allow this to happen.

We have also committed to regulating managing agents and to improving the transparency and fairness of service charges. This includes introducing a single mandatory and legally enforceable code of practice to set standards across the sector and requiring agents to be qualified to practice.

Last October, we established an independent working group, chaired by Lord Best, to take this work forward. They looked at how standards can be raised across the property sector and how fees such as service charges should be presented to consumers. The working group published its final report to the government in July 2019, and we are considering its recommendations and will announce the next steps in due course.

JUSTICE**■ Departmental Update****The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):**
[\[HCWS64\]](#)

I am pleased to be able to update the House on the Government's significant achievements in modernising the justice system over the past 10 years.

We have supported the prison system and created decent and safe prisons by undertaking the following actions:

- Since 2010 we have removed almost 50,000 Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) from our prisons, immigration removal centres and the community, and agreed new Prisoner Transfer Agreements with countries around the world to allow FNOs to serve their prison sentences in their own country, including Albania and Pakistan.
- In January 2017, we launched a campaign to recruit 2,500 additional prison officers by December 2018 to ensure the safe running of our prisons. We achieved this target 6 months early.
- In 2018/19 £70m was invested in prison safety, security and decency.
- From April 2018, we have been testing and evaluating innovative approaches to helping prisoners recover from drug addiction through our £9m Drug Recovery Prison pilot at HMP Holme House. This is a joint project between MoJ and DHSC/NHS England.
- In April 2019, we released The National Prison Drug Strategy together with guidance, and introduced innovative programmes such as Incentivised Substance Free Living.
- The recent 10 Prisons Project saw an overall 16% reduction in the rate of assaults and a 50% reduction in total positive drug tests.
- We are making a £100m investment in prison security to tackle the drugs, weapons and mobile phones that increase the risk to officers and hinder rehabilitation.

We have ensured that the sentences handed down by the courts are fair by introducing the following measures:

- In 2012, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act abolished the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence and introduced the Extended Determinate Sentences for dangerous offenders. Since 2016, implementation of measures contained in a comprehensive IPP Action Plan in 2016 has seen a dramatic reduction in the IPP prison population since abolition of the sentence.
- That same year (2012) we also consolidated previous release legislation (contained in 1967 and 1991 legislation) into the Criminal Justice Act 2003, thereby making the sentencing and release framework less complex and confusing.

- In 2015, the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2014 was brought into force. This strengthened the Extended Determinate Sentence (EDS) by providing that in all cases where such a sentence was imposed the prisoner could be held until the end of the term, with the possibility of Parole Board release from the two-thirds point (previously, some EDS prisoners were released automatically at the two-thirds point).
- In July 2019, we implemented new Parole Board Rules. This included the introduction of a new Reconsideration Mechanism to make it easier to challenge parole decisions which appear seriously flawed. This built on the rule changes enacted previously in 2018 which abolished the prohibition on disclosure of information and enabled the Parole Board to issue summaries of its decisions to victims and others who requested one.
- In October 2019 we laid legislation to ensure that serious violent and sexual offenders spend a greater proportion of their sentence in custody.
- We have also this month laid legislation to implement 2012 legislation to introduce Alcohol Abstinence and Monitoring Requirements as a sentencing option.
- This month we have also introduced the Prisoners (Disclosure of Information about Victims) Bill, responding to the Helen's Law campaign, which will ensure that cases where prisoners do not disclose the location of victim's remains or the identity of children in indecent photographs are fully considered by the Parole Board when considering the release of such a prisoner.

We have improved support for the victims of crime by introducing the following measures:

- In 2010, the first Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales was appointed. Their role is to promote the interests of victims and witnesses, encourage good practice in their treatment.
- In 2011, we implemented the Prisoners Earning Act which allows a levy to be imposed on prisoners' earnings when they are undertaking paid work in the community. This helps raise £1m plus each year to support victims.
- In 2012, we launched a consultation on 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses', setting out the government's proposed approach to ensuring that victims and witnesses get the support they need.
- In 2012, the EU Directive for Victims of Crime 2012/29/EU was passed. This requires all EU countries to establish minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. The UK fulfils these obligations through the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code). In 2015, the Victims' Code was revised to fully transpose rights within EU Victims' Directive.
- In 2013/14, Police and Crime Commissioners were allocated local funding to commission emotional and practical support services for victims of crime in their area.

- In 2014, the government established the Victims Panel, to represent the voice of victims in government policy making.
- In 2018, the Victims' Strategy was published, providing a national, cross government framework to make fundamental improvements for victims.
- In 2019, we published a consultation on amendments to the Victims' Code

We have modernised the justice system by introducing the following reforms:

- In 2012, we created new offences of causing serious injury by dangerous driving and squatting in a residential building.
- In 2015, we criminalised sexual communication with a child and made it a crime to possess a "paedophile manual" (Serious Crime Act 2015).
- We also tackled Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by extending extra territorial jurisdiction (tackling crimes committed overseas), providing anonymity for victims, introducing a new crime of failure to protect a girl under 16 and introducing new FGM Protection Orders (Serious Crime Act 2015).
- That same year we also strengthened the law on grooming and made Revenge Porn a crime (Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015).
- In 2016 we introduced public hearings to the Court of Protection increasing transparency around the Court's work.
- In 2016, the Government commissioned David Lammy MP to conduct an independent review into the experience of and outcomes for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people in the criminal justice system. In December 2017, MoJ confirmed its commitment to make progress on all the recommendations in some way.
- Since October 2017, we have been working with Health Partners on a Community Sentence Treatment Requirement (CSTR) Protocol which aims to increase the number of community sentences with mental health, drug and alcohol treatment requirements attached.
- The Assaults on Emergency Workers Act (Offences) 2018 created a new offence and raised penalties for assaults on emergency workers, including police and prison officers.
- In June 2018, MoJ published a Female Offender Strategy, which set out our vision and plan for reducing women's offending by taking a gender-informed approach to improve outcomes for female offenders at all points of the justice system.
- In April 2019 we introduced new legislation to reform divorce law, removing the need for divorcing couples to blame each other for the breakdown of their marriage.
- In February 2019, MoJ brought in a new law to ban 'up-skirting' following engagement with campaigner Gina Martin.

- In June 2019, the Government scrapped the 'same roof rule' that made some victims ineligible for compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.
- In July 2019 we introduced the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill to increase protections for victims of domestic abuse and prevent victims being cross examined by their abusers.

We have modernised the prison estate:

- Since 2010 we have opened 8,397 places via four new prisons: Isis, Thameside, Oakwood, and Berwyn, totalling 5,734 places.
- Alongside new prisons we have built 11 new house blocks at existing sites: Elmley, Nottingham, Parc (x2), Buckley Hall, Moorland, Bure, Peterborough, The Mount, Thameside, and Stocken, totalling 2,663 places.
- In the same period, we have closed a total of 7,295 places via: 20 prison closures (6,530 places) at Ashwell, Lancaster Castle, Latchmere House, Wellingborough, Bullwood Hall, Canterbury, Gloucester, Shrewsbury, Kingston, Shepton Mallet, Dorchester, Northallerton, Reading, Blundeston, Blantyre House, Haslar, Dover, Holloway, Kennet, and Glen Parva; and two partial closures (765 places).
- In 2019 the Prime Minister announced an additional £2.5bn provide an additional 10,000 prison places; the first of which will be built at Full Sutton. This is in addition to new prisons already planned at Wellingborough, which is in progress, and Glen Parva, which we expect to start building next year.

We have made improvements to probation services:

- Since 2010, we have extended probation supervision to more than 40,000 prisoners serving short sentences, who previously left prison with no statutory supervision.
- In May 2019, we announced plans to strengthen probation services by bringing the supervision of all offenders under the National Probation Service while ensuring a significant role for the voluntary and private sectors in the delivery of interventions.
- MoJ has made available £280m for voluntary and private sectors to deliver innovative rehabilitation services. The new probation structure will convene services from other government departments to support offenders, and improve the skills of the probation workforce, and the estate.

We have made considerable improvements to rehabilitation in prison, including:

- We have published our Education and Employment strategy in May 2018, which set out how we will transform our approach to ensure prisoners develop the skills they need to secure employment on release.
- We have introduced reforms to the disclosure of criminal records to prospective employers to help get ex-offenders into employment, which makes re-offending less likely.

- In May 2019, we made changes to Release on Temporary Licence policy to improve opportunities for work and resettlement while in prison.
- Through the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, we are investing up to £6.4m in a pilot scheme to support individuals released from three prisons: Bristol, Leeds and Pentonville.

We have made reforms to the way legal aid and legal support are provided:

- In 2010, the Coalition Government committed to carrying out a 'fundamental review of legal aid', in order to contribute towards reducing the deficit. This led to two major transformation programmes (the Legal Aid Reform programme and the Legal Aid Transformation programme) which included the introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO). As a result of this, between 2010-11 and 2018-19 legal aid spending fell by £945m in real terms, or 36%, whilst ensuring those in need of support could access it.
- Since the passage of LASPO, MoJ has also delivered a series of legislative changes to ensure those in need of legal aid can access it, including victims of the Grenfell disaster, offenders in prison, and most recently separated migrant children in immigration cases.
- Alongside a post-implementation review of the legal aid changes made by and since LASPO, in February 2019 MoJ published a Legal Support Action Plan which announced a range of initiatives which aim to help people resolve their legal problems earlier, including a new Legal Support Innovation Fund. We also announced a comprehensive review of the legal aid means tests to ensure that legal aid is available to those who need it and have recently announced a consultation on the housing possession court duty scheme which will ensure anyone at risk of losing their home has access to the legal help they need.
- Following reforms to the fee schemes for advocates in the Crown Court in 2017 and 2018, the MoJ has also announced a comprehensive review of criminal legal aid with the aim of creating a modern, resilient and sustainable criminal legal aid market, with a diverse workforce.

We have made reforms to the way in which Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service Operates:

- In 2016, the Lord Chancellor and senior judges set out their vision for the £1.2bn HMCTS Reform programme, to modernise the courts and tribunals system and reduce complexity in processes.
- Four new online services have been delivered to the public covering Divorce, Probate, Civil Money Claims and Social Security Appeals and have been used by over 250,000 people with user satisfaction rates over 80%.
- We have begun using the Common Platform in the magistrates' courts, which in time will deliver a single online system enabling the police, the CPS, HMCTS and legal professionals to access and share all relevant information about a case.

- We used to reject 40% of paper divorce applications because they were incorrectly filled in. The new online service has received over 65,000 applications and the rejection rate has dropped to under 1%.
- Two Courts & Tribunal Service Centres (CTSCs) have been opened in Birmingham and Stoke-on-Trent with a third due to open in Loughborough in 2020. CTSCs are transforming the way we deliver justices services and manage cases by providing a centralised, national service for all users.
- Wi-Fi has been installed in all of our courts and tribunals, and more than 80,000 professionals are accessing Wi-Fi in our courts each week.
- We have closed underused, dilapidated court buildings, raising £125m to invest more effectively in improving our justice system.
- A new system for summary offences has handled over 68,000 Transport for London and TV Licensing cases, cutting delays and inefficiency.

We have supported the UK's world-renowned legal services sector:

- We have launched the Legal Services are GREAT international marketing campaign in 2017. This promotes the UK's legal sector overseas, worth around £25bn to the UK economy, to win business for our law firms, chambers and professional bodies.

Since its launch in Singapore in 2017, the campaign has featured in 30 countries worldwide, with trade missions to Kazakhstan, China, Chile and Nigeria.

TRANSPORT

■ Departmental Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS57\]](#)

TREASURY

■ HM Revenue and Customs Update

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman):

[\[HCWS61\]](#)

The Government is committed to doing what is necessary to protect the Exchequer, maintain fairness in the tax system and give certainty to taxpayers. Therefore, the Government is announcing today that legislation will be brought forward in the next Finance Bill to put the meaning of the law in relation to automation of tax notices beyond doubt. Specifically, that legislation will put beyond doubt that HMRC's use of large-scale automated processes to give certain statutory notices, and to carry out certain functions is, and always has been, fully authorised by tax administration law. This measure will have effect both prospectively and retrospectively. The Government introduces legislation with retrospective effect only where necessary. In this case retrospective effect is necessary to close off the exchequer and operational risks presented by judicial

challenges to HMRC's ability to automate certain functions. It will protect very substantial sums of tax and penalties already legitimately paid. It will preserve the status quo for taxpayers and HMRC, merely confirming the validity of HMRC's longstanding and widely accepted operational practice. Taking this action will help to guarantee the integrity of the tax base, provide certainty to taxpayers, and allow the Government to continue to administer the tax system efficiently. More details will be published on the Finance Bill 2019-20 pages of GOV.UK.

■ Treasury Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid):

[[HCWS67](#)]

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Departmental Update

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):

[[HCWS66](#)]

The Department for Work and Pensions is the UK's biggest public service department, supporting people into work and administering the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to around **20 million** claimants and customers. The Department is carrying out a world-leading transformative welfare agenda, and has had great success in recent years, while the Health and Safety Executive continues to make the workplace safer.

Universal Credit is the biggest change programme in Europe, and the UK is seen as a world leader in welfare. The roll out of Universal Credit is now complete and it is available in every Jobcentre across the country, with **94%** of all claims paid in full and on time to **2.5 million** people. This financial year we will spend over **£95 billion** on working age benefits and over **£120 billion** on benefits for pensioners, bringing the total welfare spending across Government this year up to **£220 billion**.

The Government believes that work is a pillar of a strong economy, and that work should always pay – according to the 2018 Universal Credit full claimant service survey, **85%** of claimants believe getting and keeping a job is their number one priority – with **75%** feeling that having almost any job is better than being on benefits. Overall satisfaction among claimants has remained consistently high over the last three years, with **four out of five** people satisfied with the support they have received when claiming Universal Credit.

The next phase of Universal Credit, 'Move to UC', will open up work, allowing people to increase their hours without the penalties they would normally be subject to under Tax Credits. As of 26 September 2019 we have made over **13,800** Severe Disability Premium transitional payments, worth on average £2,280. This represents over 90 per cent of expected backdated payments, totalling over **£37.2 million**.

Universal Credit introduced a single taper system so payments reduce in a transparent and predictable way as earnings increase, making sure we support claimants in their transition into work. Additionally, when we complete moving legacy benefit claimants over

to Universal Credit, an estimated **700,000** more people will get paid their full entitlement because of Universal Credit – getting on average an extra **£285** per month.

As Universal Credit was rolled out, we made the taper more generous, reducing it to **63%**, which means claimants can work more hours and keep more of their benefits. And again, in April this year, we increased the Universal Credit Work Allowance by **£1,000** per year. This means that **2.4 million** households will keep an extra **£630** of income each year.

To support our claimants, we have introduced additional dedicated specialist Work Coaches, with training covering domestic abuse support, mental health, support for those with disabilities and health conditions, through to specialised local employment support.

Furthermore, we have made changes to support the most vulnerable, such as reducing the length of the maximum single sanction from three years to six months.

From October this year we reduced the normal maximum level of deductions in Universal Credit from **40%** to **30%** of the Standard Allowance; lowering this rate could see a couple keep up to an extra **£600** over 12 months.

To support families and households, we announced the policy to support a maximum of two children would no longer be extended to apply to children born before 6 April 2017 in new claims to Universal Credit. We have also introduced more flexible childcare cost arrangements, as well increasing their worth from up to **70%** to up to **85%**.

Additionally, we provide alternative payment arrangements such as more frequent payment options and managed payments to landlords – we have created an online system for landlords to facilitate this. We also encourage payments to go to the main carer

From April 2019, Citizens Advice have been delivering the new 'Help to Claim' support service to claimants making a new claim for Universal Credit.

In 2012, we reformed the Child Maintenance system with the aim of increasing cooperation between separated parents to meet their financial responsibilities, as this produces the best outcomes for their children. The scheme promotes parental responsibility by encouraging clients to set-up a private family-based arrangement where appropriate - and removing the obligation to join the statutory scheme.

We introduced further enforcement powers at the end of 2018 to enable us to deduct child maintenance directly from a wider range of accounts, target complex earners via a calculation of notional income based on assets and to disqualify non-compliant parents from holding a UK passport.

In June 2019, the Child Maintenance Service was managing **488,300** statutory child maintenance arrangements, covering **706,700** children.

The Government is committed to improving employment outcomes for disabled people and for those with long-term health conditions. We want to support employers to realise the benefits and insight that the huge pool of talented disabled people can bring to the workforce.

That is why we have committed to more than doubling the number of Disability Employment Advisers in our Jobcentres to over **500** to provide specialist expertise to help disabled people enter employment. Alongside this, the Government is spending **£55 billion** a year on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions. That's a record high and an increase of **£10 billion** in real terms since 2010.

In November 2017, *Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability* set out the Government's ten-year plan, including an ambition to see **1 million** more disabled people in work by 2027.

Over the past six years, we have seen **1.15 million** more disabled people in work, reaching a total of **4.1 million** in the second quarter of 2019. This includes an increase of **404,000** over the first two years since the Government announced its 2027 goal.

We are working with employers through our Disability Confident scheme; over **14,000** employers have now signed up and all Government departments are signed up to this scheme.

The Government has completed a consultation on our proposed reforms to Statutory Sick Pay so that it will be better enforced, more flexible and cover the lowest paid employees for the first time.

The Health and Safety Executive continues to make the workplace safer. It has clarified guidance on health and safety regulations to improve employer understanding of the need to consider mental health alongside physical health when undertaking a first aid needs assessment. The UK continues to rate as one of the safest countries in Europe in terms of fatal injury and to perform well against EU countries on a range of other health and safety indicators

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a more modern, dynamic and fairer benefit than the predecessor, Disability Living Allowance. PIP focuses support on those experiencing the greatest barriers to living independently. The number of working-age people now receiving support from PIP and DLA is up by over **257,000** since PIP was introduced in 2013 and, crucially, a higher proportion of the over **2.2 million** people on PIP receive the top rate of benefit than on DLA – **31%** compared to **15%**. Claimants are also receiving their benefits sooner – the average time taken to process claims is down by over **60%** since July 2014 for new claimants.

We have reduced the number of assessments for those receiving the highest level of support, where needs will not improve, as well as for people over the State Pension age. Up to **325,000** pensioners will benefit from the change to ensure that pensioners will receive ongoing PIP awards with a light touch review at the 10-year point.

The Government's pensions agenda will provide more security and safety to pensioners in retirement, tackle reckless behaviour from employers on people's pensions and help more pensioners than ever before to plan for their retirement. In 2019-20 alone, the Government expects to spend over **£120 billion** on benefits for pensioners - this includes **£99 billion** of expenditure on the State Pension.

Since 2012, **10 million** workers have automatically enrolled into a workplace pension thanks to Automatic Enrolment. This policy alone has helped to reverse a decade of decline in savings and, as of 2019-20, an estimated extra **£18.6 billion** a year will go into workplace pensions.

We are building on the success of auto-enrolment, looking to make it easier for self-employed people to save. In December 2018 the Government published a report setting out its delivery plan for research and trials to identify the most effective options to increase pension savings among the **4.9 million** self-employed workers and we will carry out these trials throughout 2019 to 2021.

The Government introduced the Triple Lock and, accordingly, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is around **£675** higher than if it had just been up-rated by earnings since April 2010. This is a rise of over **£1,600** in cash terms.

Pioneering work has been undertaken to help more people prepare for retirement than ever before. Pensions Dashboards - digital interfaces that will allow people to see online what they have in their various pensions, including their State Pension - will put individuals in control of their data; they will, for the first time, provide clear and simple information regarding pension savings in one place online and help people reconnect with 'lost' pensions pots.

The Government is also tackling reckless behaviour of employers that would strip people of their hard earned retirement funds. In February 2019 we announced measures to reduce irresponsible conduct from employers by extending The Pension Regulator's powers, including the power to send business owners to jail.

Recognising that climate change is a defining national and international emergency, we have introduced three key measures to ensure that pension schemes understand their responsibilities in responding to it. Since January 2019, those running single employer occupational pension schemes are required to establish an effective system of governance, including consideration of environmental, social and governance factors related to investment assets in investment decisions; and schemes with 100 or more members must carry out and document a risk assessment of their system of governance including risks relating to climate change. Furthermore, as of 1st October, trustees of occupational pension schemes must state their policy on how they take account of the financial risks of climate change when developing their investment strategies.

The Government is committed to ensuring that people have access to the information and guidance they need to make effective financial decisions throughout their lives. The Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018 has brought together the services provided by Pension Wise, the Pensions Advisory Service and the Money Advice Service into a single organisation.

We have promoted long-term savings and pensions products, including the Lifetime Individual Savings Account, to encourage and incentivise more people to make provision for long-term needs, including a house purchase and retirement. We are encouraging working people to save for a workplace pension by helping to protect their savings and monitoring the products, charges, and processes adopted by pension schemes. We are

also giving individuals the confidence to save and access their pension pots by providing more guidance and support on pensions through the establishment of the Money and Pensions Service which is delivering free and impartial money and pension guidance, along with debt advice.

We will continue to engage across Government to ensure that we are aligned with the Industrial Strategy, supporting the flexible working task force, and the Careers Strategy and the National Retraining Scheme – ensuring that skills provision meets the needs of an ageing demographic. We have introduced Older Claimant Champions into all **34** Jobcentre Plus districts. We will also continue to work with employers through our Business Champion for Older Workers and the Local Enterprise Partnerships. We will ensure there are provisions for older returners to the workplace by working with Government Equalities Office and HM Treasury, and are engaging with businesses to understand their concerns in line with changes to the ageing demographic of the workforce.

We have also been supporting everyone who can, and wants to work, to continue to work. Initiatives such as the Fuller Working Lives strategy have led to more people aged 50-64 in employment than ever before. In addition to our legislative reforms such as removing the Default Retirement Age and extending the right to request flexible working, we are supporting employers to recruit, re-train and retain older workers.

Our record on employment is strong, and the number of people in work is up by over **3.6 million** since 2010 – a near-record high. The employment rate, at **75.9%**, is also at a near-record high, with **1,000** more people moving into work on average every day since 2010.

Through our New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) scheme, we have supported **209,000** claimants to create over **130,000** businesses since 2011. On average, we have helped to launch **203** businesses by unemployed benefit claimants, every week since 2017.

UK nationals make up around **90%** of all people in work and have accounted for **66%** of the rise in employment over the last nine years. Additionally, over **60%** of the growth in employment since 2010 has been outside London and the South East. There are now more than **1 million** fewer workless households than in 2010 and **730,000** fewer children living in a household where no one works.

Since 2010, over **75%** of the growth in employment has been in full time work and employment, and employment high-skilled occupations has risen by over **2.9 million**.

There are over **1.8 million** more women in work since 2010, and the female unemployment rate is at **3.7%** – a near record low; the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic employment rate has reached **66.2%** – a near record high – up **7.4%** since 2010; and, the youth unemployment level has almost halved since 2010, to a near record low - falling by more than **130** on average every day. Furthermore, wages have been growing for **19** consecutive months.

We are providing targeted support for young people between the ages of 18 and 24 to get into employment, through the Youth Obligation Support Programme (YOSP), as well as other specialised support within Jobcentres for young people.