



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 January 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 14 January 2020). 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

■ **Katelyn Dawson**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[1686\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if he will undertake a review of the decision by the CPS not to prosecute the driver responsible for the death of 15-year-old school girl Katelyn Dawson.

Michael Ellis:

This is indeed a tragic case and I offer my sincere condolences to Katelyn Dawson's family and friends. This case has been reviewed multiple times, culminating in an independent review by senior external Counsel which found that the case should not be prosecuted.

The CPS determined not to bring proceedings against the driver of the vehicle as he had passed out at the wheel due to an unforeseeable medical condition. Under the Victim's Right to Review (VRR), Katelyn's family asked the CPS to reconsider the decision. The Chief Crown Prosecutor personally reviewed the original decision, as the first stage of the VRR process. The Chief Crown Prosecutor upheld the original decision. The Appeals and Review Unit then reviewed the case. A further independent review was then carried out by a Specialist Prosecutor. Senior Counsel external to the CPS was also instructed due to the highly sensitive nature of the case and the unusual circumstances. This second entirely independent review also concluded that the case should not be prosecuted.

A clear and independent process is already in place to ensure victims' rights are supported and protected and was fully operative in this case. It would therefore not be right for me to interfere with that independent process.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Living Wage**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how frequently she plans to raise the National Living Wage to meet the Government target of two-thirds of median earnings by 2024.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has announced that in April 2020 the National Living Wage (NLW) will increase by 6.2 per cent to £8.72 for those aged 25 and over. The Government has also announced inflation-beating increases in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates for younger workers and apprentices of between 4.6 per cent and 6.5 per cent.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has pledged that the NLW will increase further, reaching two-thirds of median earnings by 2024, providing economic conditions allow. The Government also plans to expand the reach of the NLW, bringing down the eligibility threshold first to age 23 in 2021 and then to 21 by 2024.

The Government increases the NLW and NMW rates annually with consideration to recommendations made by the independent Low Pay Commission (LPC). The Government will publish the LPC's 2020 remit, which will include details of the new target for the NLW to reach two-thirds of median earnings by 2024.

■ **Pregnancy: Discrimination**

Martyn Day: [\[424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment the Government has made of trends in the level of pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace; and if she will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the importance of tackling pregnancy and maternity discrimination. That is why we committed in our Manifesto to reform redundancy law so companies cannot discriminate against women after they have returned from maternity leave.

The Government is currently undertaking the Maternity and Paternity Rights Survey which surveys over 3,000 parents across Great Britain to understand leave and employment decisions when they have a baby, this includes a question on whether a parent experienced any discrimination at work.

The Government will undertake further research into pregnancy and maternity related discrimination when the current package of interventions has had time to take effect.

■ **Renewable Energy**

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[1269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent comparative assessment his Department has made of the costs and benefits of the use of solar thermal collectors as alternatives to water heated by heat pumps and solar PV panels; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

[Holding answer 13 January 2020]: The use of electricity from solar PV to heat water is most commonly achieved by directly heating water in a thermal store using an immersion heater rather than a heat pump. As heating water with heat pumps and solar PV panels is relatively uncommon, and this method is not considered to be a potential major source of renewable heat generation in the future, the Department has not made a comparative assessment of the costs and benefits of the use of solar thermal collectors against water heated by heat pumps and solar PV.

Catherine West:

[\[1422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional steps her Department has taken to increase the supply of renewable energy production.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

[Holding answer 13 January 2020]: This Government is committed to meeting net zero by 2050, and in 2019, the Government became the first major economy in the world to have legislated for a net zero target to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from across the UK economy by 2050. We agree with the Committee on Climate Change's view on the importance of a diverse mix of power generation sources to achieve that with renewables providing the majority of our electricity by 2050 alongside firm low carbon power from sources such as nuclear, and gas or biomass generation with carbon capture and storage.

The Government has introduced many initiatives to increase the supply of renewable energy production in the UK and with this support, carbon emissions have reduced by 42%, while the economy has grown by 73% since 1990. We have also seen rapid deployment of solar PV over the last 8 years, with over 99% of the UK's solar PV capacity deployed since May 2010 and half of the world's offshore wind deploying in the UK. We have committed up to £557m of annual support for future Contracts for Difference, providing developers with the confidence they need to invest in bringing forward new projects and we are supporting our world-leading offshore wind industry through the 2019 sector deal.

In order to support smaller scale renewable electricity generation, the Government introduced the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) on 1 January, which gives small scale low-carbon electricity generators, such as homes with solar panels, the right to be paid for the renewable electricity they export to the grid. Unlike the previous Feed-in Tariff scheme, the SEG is a market-driven mechanism. It paves the way to projects being deployed without subsidies.

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) supports the transition to low-carbon heating in the UK, helping generate renewable heat for schools, hospitals and more than 12,000 social housing properties. The scheme is designed to bridge the gap between the cost of fossil fuel heat sources and renewable heat alternatives through financial support for owners of participating installations. The RHI helps to sustain and build the supply-chains needed to deliver our aspirations for renewable heat in 2020 and beyond

We are working to develop a new policy framework for the long-term decarbonisation of heat. We have committed to publishing a policy roadmap in summer 2020. This will set out the programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions in the first half of 2020 on how we achieve mass transition to low carbon heating.

■ Renewable Energy: Carbon Emissions

Alan Brown:

[\[1050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 7 October 2016 to Question 45055, how many tonnes of carbon dioxide were displaced by renewable (a) electricity and (b) heat generation in (i) the UK, (ii) England, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Wales in (A) 2016, (B) 2017 and (C) 2018.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Answer of 7 October 2016 to Question 45055 estimated the displacement of carbon dioxide emissions in 2015 as renewable electricity generation multiplied by the average emissions factor for electricity supplied by fossil fuel stations in 2015. However, using the same methodology for subsequent years would be misleading due to the steep drop in the average fossil fuels emissions factor between 2015 and 2016. The increase in the carbon price floor in 2015 and closure of coal-fired power stations drove a switch from coal to gas generation. This methodology would therefore not differentiate between the reduction in carbon dioxide due to displacement of coal by gas and the reduction due to the displacement of fossil fuels by renewables.

■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[1676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to change the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme so that hot water from solar thermal collectors can be used to support a home's heating needs under that scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is tax-payer funded, and supporting solar thermal for space heating would not represent good value for money. This is because solar thermal systems are normally only capable of meeting a portion of a house's heat demand (so a backup space heating system would be required), and are not as cost-effective in space heating when compared to other technologies.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Average Earnings

Damian Hinds:

[\[1347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what time series data sets her Department holds of average earnings (a) by sector, (b) by region and (c) for people consistently in employment before and since 2007-08; and for how many years those data sets have been collated.

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 [2020.01.09 -PQ 1347 - UKSA response .pdf]

■ Civil Servants: Recruitment**Rosie Duffield:****[1411]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the blog post dated 2 January 2020 published by Dominic Cummings, what steps he is taking to ensure that the proposed recruitment processes are compliant with (a) General Data Protection Regulation, (b) the Civil Service code and (c) the Equality Act 2010.

Oliver Dowden:

The blog invites people to get in touch to discuss opportunities. The blog post does not set out proposed recruitment processes.

Recruitment to the Civil Service is through fair and open competition following section 10 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act.

Special Adviser appointments are made by Ministers in accordance with section 15 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act.

■ Honours**Wendy Chamberlain:****[1799]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, at what time his officials found out that the addresses of recipients of honours in the 2020 New Year Honours list had been published.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Hon Member to the written Ministerial Statement laid on Tuesday 7 January 2020, HCWS21, available on the [Parliament website](#).

Wendy Chamberlain:**[1800]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to investigate how the addresses of recipients of honours in the 2020 New Year Honours list were published in error; and whether the results of that investigation will be made public.

Wendy Chamberlain:**[1801]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of people whose addresses were published in the 2020 New Year Honours List his Department has contacted to date.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the Hon Member to the written Ministerial Statement laid on Tuesday 7 January 2020, HCWS21, available on the [Parliament website](#), which lays out the

action taken by the Cabinet Office to limit the impact of the breach and to ensure it does not happen again.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[1803\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential for legal action to be taken against his Department in connection to publishing the addresses of recipients of honours in the 2020 New Year Honours list.

Jeremy Quin:

It is not appropriate to comment on any legal advice the Government receives. The Cabinet Office is cooperating fully with the Information Commissioner, to which it reported itself.

■ Public Bodies: Sanctions

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[388\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the proposed restrictions on public bodies using their resources to support boycotts, divestment or sanctions against foreign countries or those who trade with them would prevent support of campaigns against UK trade involving companies linked to the military of Myanmar.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[389\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the proposed restrictions on public institutions using their resources to support boycotts, divestment or sanctions against foreign countries or those who trade with them would prevent support of campaigns against UK trade involving firms linked with the persecution of the Uighur people in Xinjiang province, China.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[390\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the proposed restrictions on public institutions using their resources to support boycotts, divestment or sanctions against foreign countries or those who trade with them would prevent support of campaigns against UK trade involving companies connected with deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[391\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the proposed restrictions on public institutions using their resources to support boycotts, divestment or sanctions against foreign countries or those who trade with them would prevent support of campaigns against UK trade involving companies linked with police or security services that have been alleged to have committed human rights abuses in Hong Kong.

Oliver Dowden:

I refer the Hon. Member to the briefing notes on the Queen's Speech (p.133-134) published on 19 December 2019, which outline the Government's proposals:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/queens-speech-december-2019-background-briefing-notes>

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Oldham

Jim McMahon:

[440]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people have been recruited by the armed forces from the Oldham Metropolitan Borough area in each year from 2010 to date.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The requested information is available for the past five years and is provided in the following table:

Intake to the Untrained Regular Force from Oldham Local Authority:

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Tri-Service	50	50	40	30	40

Notes:

1. The requested information is only held from 2014 onwards.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 in line with disclosure control policy. Figures ending in 5 are rounded to the nearest 20 to avoid bias, 5 or fewer is represented by '~', 0 is represented by '!'.
3. Due to limitations with the data sources, figures are approximate prior to rounding.

■ Libya: Armed Conflict

Dr Matthew Offord:

[1381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of foreign combatants transferred from Syria to engage in armed conflict in Libya.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are aware of reports of foreign combatants being transferred from Syria to engage in armed conflict in Libya. The picture remains unclear. The UK continues to play a diplomatic role in calling for all parties to de-escalate, support a ceasefire and to get behind the UN-led political process.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **5G: North Herefordshire****Bill Wiggin:**[\[1699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the roll out 5G; and when 5G will be available in North Herefordshire.

Matt Warman:

As part of our commitment to becoming a world leader in 5G, the government has been working to ensure we build the right conditions for commercial investment in 5G. One part of this work has been the significant investment made to establish a nationally coordinated 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme, which continues to build the business case for 5G in Britain.

Another component has been the establishment of the Barrier Busting Task Force, which continues to look to identify barriers to 5G deployment and work with industry, local authorities, and others to overcome them.

This work has contributed to the 5G rollout beginning earlier than expected, with all four Mobile Network Operators having launched their 5G offerings as of last year. Currently a 5G signal is available, from at least one operator, in over 50 major cities and towns across the UK, with a further 18 locations expected to be covered by the end of 2020.

It is important to note that the vast majority of commercial rollout of 5G services will be delivered by industry, according to their own timeframes. As such, it is difficult to confirm exactly when 5G services will be available in North Herefordshire.

In the interim, government is working closely with the Mobile Network Operators on the Shared Rural Network proposal to provide high quality 4G coverage to 95 percent of the UK.

This proposal will help reduce the amount of partial not spots - area where this is currently only coverage from at least one, but not all operators - and total not spots - areas with no coverage from any operator, ensuring good 4G signal wherever people live, work and travel.

Harder to reach areas, such as rural and remote spots within North Herefordshire, are expected to see the greatest benefit from the proposal.

■ **Actors: Females****Seema Malhotra:**[\[1741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with British TV and film production companies on increasing the number of female actresses in lead roles in television and film.

Nigel Adams:

The Secretary of State regularly meets with film and television representatives from a range of backgrounds as part of her role. However, due to the confidential nature of many of these meetings, we are unable to give details of such engagements.

Increasing screen diversity is a priority for government, and we continue to work with our arm's length body the British Film Institute (BFI) to improve representation both on and off screen, including through supporting the wider adoption of their world-leading Diversity Standards.

Cambridge Analytica**Louise Haigh:**[\[489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent representations she has received from the Information Commissioner on Cambridge Analytica.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has had a number of meetings with the independent Information Commissioner on a range of issues. The Information Commissioner has committed to providing the Digital, Culture Media and Sport Select Committee with a final update on its investigation into the use of personal data in political campaigns. A date for this update will be agreed with the Chair of the Committee once appointed.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport**Tracy Brabin:**[\[1778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had discussions with (a) civil servants, (b) Cabinet colleagues and (c) recognised trades unions on the future of her Department since the December 2019 General Election.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has announced that the Department for Exiting the EU will be wound up once the UK leaves the EU on 31 January. All Machinery of Government changes are a matter for the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister has set out an ambitious programme for the Government to unite and level up the country, delivering on its key priorities around getting Brexit done and investing in the NHS, education, safer streets and better infrastructure.

Gambling Act 2005**Tracy Brabin:**[\[1777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date her Department plans to commence its review of the Gambling Act 2005.

Helen Whately:

The Government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. We will announce further details in due course.

■ Loneliness**Scott Benton:** [\[459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of (a) the Government's loneliness strategy in reducing loneliness and (b) cross-departmental working to implement that strategy.

Helen Whately:

Government is committed to understanding the impact of its activity on loneliness and will use this insight to inform future decision-making. The 60 commitments made in the loneliness strategy vary widely and so learning is captured in different ways. Many of these commitments are still in progress and evaluation will emerge over time. For example, an independent evaluation of the £11.5m Building Connections Fund is underway, and the findings will be published from mid-2020 onwards.

The first annual report on government's work on tackling loneliness will be published shortly, and will set out progress to date.

Cross-departmental working has continued to be effective, with close working between the nine departments involved to ensure successful implementation of the strategy.

■ Passenger Ships: Standards**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's proposals for older passenger boats on the National Historic Ships Register that are unable to comply with new requirements set out in the review of standards for older passenger ships.

Helen Whately:

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has not met with the Secretary of State for Transport to discuss this matter. However, National Historic Ships UK (NHS-UK), an independent advisory body reporting to DCMS, responded to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's 2019 consultations on behalf of the sector, and discussed the potential impacts of the new requirements on vessels on the National Historic Ships Register, which it maintains. NHS-UK praised the Marine and Coastguard Agency's inclusive approach.

■ Performing Arts: Children**Scott Benton:** [\[461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to improve access for children in (a) Blackpool South constituency and (b) other deprived communities to (i) music, (ii) film, (iii) dance and (iv) theatre.

Helen Whately:

Arts Council England funds a number of national music and cultural education programmes across the country which aim to reach those from deprived communities. Alongside this, in 2019, five new Youth Performance Partnerships were launched to provide new opportunities for young people from areas of low cultural engagement and high levels of deprivation to experience high quality performances and to develop practical skills both on and off stage (including dance, art, music, creative writing, lighting, sound, costume and set design). And, as announced in our election Manifesto, we will also offer an Arts Premium to secondary schools to fund enriching activities for all pupils.

In Blackpool, programmes such as Curious Minds have supported the development of an established Local Cultural Education Partnership now led by Blackpool Teaching Schools Alliance which plays an important role in developing strong provision for children in Blackpool. In addition, Into Film, a UK-wide body funded by the government through the BFI, encourages children to engage with film culture through after-school film clubs. There are 8000 across the UK, including 35 in the Blackpool South constituency. Last year, the BFI held two BFI Film Academy taster sessions in the Blackpool area to encourage young people to consider a career in the industry, and also ran a discounted ticket scheme for disadvantaged schools across the country.

Public Libraries: Closures**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to prevent library closures.

Helen Whately:

Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. It is for individual local authorities to decide how best to provide a public library service that meets local needs within their available resources. The net expenditure on the library service by local authorities in England increased in 2018/19 from 2017/18.

DCMS works across central and local government to encourage investment in libraries to ensure they can continue to support the delivery of local and national priorities and needs. The DCMS funded Libraries Taskforce was established, by DCMS and the Local Government Association, to devise and implement the "Libraries Deliver" strategy which is helping support and reinvigorate the public library service in England. It has worked with sector partners to advocate for libraries and to share and promote good practice to help libraries better serve their communities.

In October 2019 DCMS also announced the £250 million Cultural Investment Fund, of which over £125 million will be invested in regional museums and libraries over five years from 2020/21. The funds will be used to upgrade buildings and technology so

public libraries across England are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them.

EDUCATION

■ Academies

Sir Mark Hendrick: [946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his policy is on the academies programme for the next five years.

Nick Gibb:

The Government's vision is to continue developing a world-class school-led system by giving school leaders the freedom to run their schools in the way they know best. The academies programme can provide opportunities for this through its key principles of autonomy, accountability and collaboration.

Academies will continue to be at the core of the Government's flagship schools reform policies. Over 7 in 10 sponsored academies that have been inspected by Ofsted are now judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Prior to converting to academies, only 1 in 10 of these schools were judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

The Government wants to ensure that the opportunities afforded by the academies programme are spread to those areas that are not currently benefiting.

■ Children in Care

Seema Malhotra: [1742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the change in the number of children in care since 2010.

Seema Malhotra: [1743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department has provided to local authorities for children in care since 2010.

Seema Malhotra: [1744]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to undertake a review on his Department's policies in relation to the (a) wellbeing and (b) needs of children in care.

Michelle Donelan:

Information on the number of children in care since 2010 is published in table H1 of the annual statistical release 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2018 to 2019', which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

The drivers of demand are complex. A sector-led 'Care Crisis Review' in 2018 found that there are many inter-linked factors contributing to the rise in care proceedings

and children entering care. We are funding a What Works Centre for Children's Social Care whose first research priority is to look at what works in safely reducing the need for children to enter care.

The government is committed to supporting children in care and wants all looked-after children to have a secure, stable and loving family environment to support them through childhood and beyond. In December, we announced an additional £45 million for the adoption support fund to reduce the number of children waiting for a permanent home and to strengthen relationships with their adoptive parents. We are also providing councils with an additional £1 billion for adults and children's social care in every year of this Parliament. As set out in the manifesto, we are committed to undertaking a review of the care system. This review will allow us to go even further and to ensure that all care placements and settings provide children and young people with the support they need.

Since 2010 we have improved support for children in care, and have invested funding and support in local authorities in a range of areas including:

- £200 million in the Innovation Programme, testing new approaches in children's social care, including targeted support for looked after children
- established the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care to drive improvement and ensure that innovation and best practice are at the heart of local authority social work
- introduced the Corporate Parenting Principles through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, for the first time setting out how local authorities can be a good 'corporate parent'
- put in place measures such as the local authority Virtual School Head, giving looked-after children top priority in school admissions and extra funding to meet their needs through the Pupil Premium Plus, worth £2,300 per child
- invested £1 million to pilot high quality mental health assessments for children on entry to local authority care

This is in addition to the commitments we have made to improve the lives of children in residential and foster care, through our strategies published in 2016 and 2018.

■ Children: Day Care

Angela Rayner:

[1755]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many 3-4 year old children are ineligible for 30 hours of free childcare as a result of (a) one parent and (b) both parents not meeting the minimum earnings threshold.

Nick Gibb:

The Department aims to ensure parents have access to a range of affordable childcare, giving them increased flexibility in their working hours and helping children thrive in the crucial early years. The Department is planning to spend more than £3.6 billion to support our early education entitlements in 2020-21.

All 3-4-year-old children in England are eligible for the universal entitlement to 15 hours a week of early education. The additional 15 hours of early education a week, known as '30 hours', is available to families where both parents are working, or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family. To be eligible, each parent in a two-parent family, or the sole parent, must earn less than £100,000 a year and more than the equivalent to 16 hours a week at national minimum wage or national living wage (currently £6,800 a year). This also includes self-employed parents and parents on zero-hour contracts.

All children aged 4 at 31 August in England are entitled to a place in a reception class at school starting that September.

The Department for Education estimates that in January 2019, 530,000 3-4-year-olds were ineligible for the additional 15 hours due to one or both of their parents earning below the lower income threshold. This is estimated as follows (figures rounded to nearest 10,000):

- There were 1,370,000 children aged 3 or 4 at 31 December 2018.
- 410,000 4-year-olds were in a reception place in January 2019.
- A further 410,000 3-4 year-olds were eligible for 30 hours.
- 20,000 3-4-year-olds were ineligible for 30 hours due to one of their parents earning over £100,000 per year. This is estimated using the Survey of Personal Incomes publication.
- Therefore we estimate that there are 530,000 3-4-year-olds who are ineligible for 30 hours because their parents do not meet the minimum income requirements. This includes families where one or both parents choose not to or are unable to work.

The Department does not hold information on these estimated 530,000 children separated out as requested in parts a and b of the question.

There is support available for parents with childcare costs outside of the free early education entitlements. Eligible families can get help with 85% of their childcare costs through Universal Credit, subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for two or more children. Further information can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/what-youll-get>. Families can receive help with the costs of childcare from the Tax-Free Childcare scheme.

■ Educational Institutions: Sanitary Protection

Caroline Lucas:

[1332]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 28 October 2019 to Question 2798 on Educational Institutions: Sanitary Protection, which of the products to be made available to schools and 16-19 institutions (a) contain (i) plastic, (ii) plastic applicators and (iii) no plastic and (b) are reusable; and what steps he is taking to promote the use of sustainable products under that scheme.

Michelle Donelan:

The scheme will provide a wide range of period products for schools and 16-19 organisations to choose from. This will include environmentally friendly pads, reusable pads, organic non-applicator tampons and menstrual cups. The ingredients for each product will be provided on the ordering portal and in the scheme's guidance.

Schools and colleges know their learners best and will have the freedom to select the most suitable products for their learners, considering cost and type of product. We will be monitoring product choice closely and will continue to seek opportunities to encourage the use of sustainable products as the scheme develops.

Further Education: Finance**Angela Rayner:**[\[1754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what was the base rate of funding was for 16-18 year olds in 2020-21 prices, in 2009-10.

Michelle Donelan:

The current 16 to 19 funding system, including the base rate arrangement, was introduced in 2013. The 16 to 19 base rate did not exist before this so it is not possible to provide a 2009-10 base rate at 2020-21 prices.

Schools: Land**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[1806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's transparency data entitled, Decisions on the Disposal of School Land, published on 2 January 2019, for what reason the list of approved sales has not been updated since January 2019, and if he will update that list.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises the importance of updating the decision list, which is undertaken periodically. Officials in the Department will shortly publish an update. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education is keen to protect school playing fields. Schools are only able to sell playing fields when they demonstrate that the disposal does not impact their curriculum and they can demonstrate they have explored all possible alternatives.

Teachers**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[1069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to invest in continuing professional development for middle leaders in schools, as recommended in the National Association of Head Teachers' report of 12 November 2019, entitled About Time: Life as a middle leader.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has put in place a range of measures to support middle leaders, including those that address the recommendations of the National Association of Head Teachers report.

Improvements to National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), including the NPQ for middle leadership, for aspiring and serving middle leaders, have been well received by the profession. NPQ scholarships target funding towards the professional development of primary and secondary middle leaders in the country's most challenging schools. The Department is also currently developing new specialist NPQs to support and promote career pathways beyond traditional leadership routes that can enable teachers and leaders to progress and excel in specialist areas. The Department is working closely with the sector on the design of these new qualifications and will release further details in due course.

The Department wants to continue to strengthen support for those already in middle-leadership roles through collaboration with the profession. For example, the High Potential Middle Leaders programme (branded Expert Middle Leaders) targets funding towards accelerating the professional development of primary and secondary middle leaders in the country's most challenging schools, to enable them to raise attainment within their schools and develop their potential for senior leadership.

Teachers: Bureaucracy**Preet Kaur Gill:****[1068]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recommendations in the report by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) of 12 November 2019, entitled About Time: Life as a middle leader; and what discussions he has had with the NAHT on that report.

Nick Gibb:

I refer the hon. Member for Birmingham Edgbaston to the answer I gave on 8 January 2020 to Question [179](#).

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**Air Pollution: North West****Ms Angela Eagle:****[1694]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment her Department has made of air quality in (a) the North West, (b) Wirral and (c) Wallasey.

Rebecca Pow:

Air quality is generally improving in the UK, as set out in the annual National Statistics report at the following URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/air-quality-statistics>.

There are 171 national monitoring stations in the UK operated by the Environment Agency on behalf of Defra, of which 18 stations are in North West and Merseyside including two in Wirral (Wirral Tranmere and Birkenhead Borough Road). Near real-time measurements from these sites and further data tools can be found on the UK-AIR website (<https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/>). Within the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral annual mean levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter have been below statutory limit values and stable over the last five years, consistent with national trends.

There are no automatic monitoring stations in Wallasey. However, Wirral Council also assesses its own air quality using 31 passive monitors to measure NO₂ across the Borough which is made available through Annual Status Reports (<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/environmental-problems/pollution-control/air-quality>). Only one exceedance of the annual mean limit value for NO₂ was observed in 2018 with levels at most sites either showing a lower or similar value compared to 2017 levels.

■ Litter: Beaches

Scott Benton:

[462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to tackle rubbish and plastic waste on beaches; and what support her Department is giving to local authorities to enable them to tackle that waste.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy for England, published in December 2018, and the Litter Strategy for England (2017) set out our plans to reduce litter and plastic pollution and move towards a more circular economy.

Local councils are responsible for keeping their relevant land (including beaches above mean high water springs) clear of litter and refuse, so far as is practicable. The Litter Innovation Fund, launched in 2017, made nearly £500,000 available to councils and others to pilot and test small-scale innovative approaches to reducing litter.

The majority of ocean plastic pollution originates on land and our efforts have focussed on preventing plastic entering the ocean in the first place. We have already made good progress, removing 15.6 billion plastic bags from circulation with our 5p charge and introducing a world-leading ban on the sale of microbeads in rinse-off personal care products.

The Government consulted on a number of key policy measures set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy: reforming existing packaging waste regulations; exploring the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers; increasing consistency in the recycling system; and introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content. These measures will help to tackle plastic waste, including on beaches and will be brought forward in the forthcoming Environment Bill and future finance bills.

Government recognises the financial pressures on local authorities. They will therefore receive additional resource to meet new net costs arising from the policies set out in this Strategy once implemented.

■ **Trees: New Forest**

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there are plans to extend the cover of ancient and ornamental woodlands in the New Forest.

Rebecca Pow:

The Ancient and Ornamental woodlands of the New Forest are generally understood to refer to the unenclosed woods originating in the 18th century or earlier. Collectively these are amongst the finest remnants of comparatively undisturbed ancient deciduous forest in the lowlands of Western Europe. All of the Ancient and Ornamental woodlands are already included in the designated area and given their nature there are no plans to extend the area designated as Ancient and Ornamental woodland.

EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION

■ **Brexit**

Sarah Atherton: [\[900019\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on arrangements for the UK leaving the EU.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government remains committed to working closely with the devolved administrations on EU Exit. Our most recent discussions with the devolved administrations took place last Thursday at the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU negotiations.

■ **Brexit: Northern Ireland**

Stephen Timms: [\[900021\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the potential effect of the Withdrawal Agreement on the Northern Ireland economy.

James Duddridge:

I regularly meet with my predecessor, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to discuss the deal, including the new Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, and will continue to do so.

As the Prime Minister has said, beyond the changes introduced by the Protocol, there will be no changes to GB-NI trade. Northern Ireland remains part of the UK's customs territory.

■ Brexit: Scotland

Gavin Newlands:

[\[900020\]](#)

What plans the Government has to seek the consent of the Scottish Parliament to the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government remains committed to the Sewel convention and the principle of legislative consent. The Secretary of State wrote to the Scottish Government on 18 December to seek their recommendation of consent for the Bill and has discussed this directly with Mike Russell.

I am disappointed that the Scottish Parliament voted against granting consent last week. We will continue to discuss the Bill with the Scottish Government.

■ Immigration

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[1760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, whether clause 11(3) of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill provides for Ministers to limit the (a) scope and (b) availability of judicial review of Home Office decisions made under clause 11(2)(g) of that Bill.

James Duddridge:

The power in clause 11(3) will be used to ensure that the Special Immigration Appeals Commission is able to hear a review of an exclusion direction made on national security grounds in relation to an individual within the scope of the EU Settlement Scheme.

There is no intention to use the power in clause 11 to limit the scope or availability of judicial review.

■ UK Relations with EU: Scotland

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[900024\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on bringing forward legislative proposals to give Scotland a statutory role in negotiations on a future relationship with the EU.

James Duddridge:

It is the responsibility of the UK Government to negotiate international agreements, and it is vital that we retain appropriate flexibility to proceed with negotiations at pace.

We are nevertheless clear that the devolved administrations should be closely involved in the process. We have already engaged extensively with them in negotiation preparations, and will continue to do so. There is no need to set out in statute a course of action we are already pursuing.

Last Thursday, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Lord Callanan, Minister of State for the Department for Exiting the European Union, met with Mike Russell at the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU negotiations.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Australia: Fires

Kenny MacAskill:

[457]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what requests for (a) aid and (b) assistance have been received from the Australian Government in respect the ongoing bush fires in that country; and what (i) aid and (ii) assistance the Government is providing.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon have been in contact with their Australian counterparts to offer our condolences and stress our readiness to help in whatever way they need.

As I set out in my Oral Statement of 9 January in the House of Commons, we have deployed a team of UK experts to Australia.

The team includes a senior member of UK Fire and Rescue Service, a medical specialist in trauma and mental health, and a military liaison officer specialising in crisis response.

They will work with Australian counterparts to establish what further UK support will be of most use to Australian emergency responders, and ensure that such contributions are fully integrated with Australian efforts.

Julian Knight:

[477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assistance the UK Government is providing to the Australian Government while it tackles the effects of the wildfires in that country.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon have been in contact with their Australian counterparts to offer our condolences and stress our readiness to help in whatever way they need.

As I set out in my Oral Statement of 9 January in the House of Commons, we have deployed a team of UK experts to Australia.

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They will work with Australian counterparts to establish what further UK support will be of most use to Australian emergency responders, and ensure that such contributions are fully integrated with Australian efforts.

■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

Mary Glendon:

[\[1731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in the Bahrain Government on the reimposition of death sentences against Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa on 8 January 2020 in Bahrain.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As I tweeted on 8 January, we are deeply concerned about the death sentence given to Mohamed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa. The UK has raised the matter with senior members of the Bahraini Government. The UK's position on the use of the death penalty is longstanding and clear; we oppose its use in all circumstances and countries. The Government of Bahrain is fully aware of our position.

Catherine West:

[\[1773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Bahraini counterpart on not upholding on appeal the death sentences of prisoners Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

As I tweeted on 8 January, we are deeply concerned about the death sentence given to Mohamed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa. The UK has raised the matter with senior members of the Bahraini Government. The UK's position on the use of the death penalty is longstanding and clear; we oppose its use in all circumstances and countries. The Government of Bahrain is fully aware of our position.

■ Bermuda: Tourism

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[1306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase tourism between the UK and Bermuda.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[1309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase tourism between the UK and Gibraltar.

Christopher Pincher:

Responsibility for tourism is devolved to the Overseas Territories Governments. The British Government supports strong cultural links with the Overseas Territories, which attract many visitors from the United Kingdom each year.

■ China: Uighurs**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[1786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had (a) his UN counterparts and (b) his Chinese counterpart on Uighur Muslims in China.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have particularly serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang including the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in “political re-education camps”, systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. Reports indicating that forced labour is being used and children are being forcibly separated from their parents add to the growing body of evidence about the disturbing situation that Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in Xinjiang.

I have not had recent discussions with my Chinese counterpart on the treatment and living conditions of the Uyghur Muslims in China. We regularly raise our concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang with the Chinese authorities. The British Ambassador to China raised our concerns with Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang on 24 December 2019. We also regularly discuss the situation in Xinjiang with likeminded partners including at the UN. We have issued or joined a number of statements of concern in recent months: on 29 October 2019 at UN Third Committee, the UK read out a joint statement signed by 22 others drawing attention to the human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang and called on China to uphold its obligations to respect human rights; on 24 September, during the UN General Assembly the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, UN and South Africa called on China to allow UN observers immediate and unfettered access to the region; on 17 September 2019, at the 42nd session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UK again called for UN experts to be granted unfettered access to Xinjiang and raised our concerns on arbitrary detention.

Afzal Khan:[\[1797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the treatment of Uighur Muslims; and what assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Xinjiang.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have particularly serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang including the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in “political re-education camps”, systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. Reports indicating that forced labour is being used and children are being forcibly separated from their parents add to the growing body of evidence about the disturbing situation that Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in Xinjiang.

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Afzal Khan:

[1798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the treatment and living conditions of the Uighur people in China; and what assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Xinjiang.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We have particularly serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang including the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in “political re-education camps”, systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. Reports indicating that forced labour is being used and children are being forcibly separated from their parents add to the growing body of evidence about the disturbing situation that Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in Xinjiang.

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■ Falkland Islands: Tourism**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[1305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase tourism between the UK and the Falkland Islands.

Christopher Pincher:

Responsibility for tourism is devolved to the Overseas Territories Governments. The British Government supports strong cultural links with the Overseas Territories, which attract many visitors from the United Kingdom each year. The United Kingdom recently played a key role in securing a second commercial flight to the Falkland Islands.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Lydian International**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[1783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much Lydian International paid the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to sponsor the Queen's Birthday Party Event at the British Embassy in Armenia in June 2018.

Christopher Pincher:

British Embassies routinely attract corporate sponsorship to fund the annual Queen's Birthday Party celebrations in order to minimise costs to British taxpayers.

■ Hong Kong: Demonstrations**Sarah Champion:** [\[1367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Hong Kong Government on police brutality in Hong Kong during the protests there over Christmas and new year.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

We remain seriously concerned at events in Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary has made a number of statements that have repeated the UK position that protests should be conducted peacefully, within the law, and that the response of the authorities is proportionate. There is now an opportunity to find a way through the crisis with meaningful political dialogue, that reflects the legitimate aspirations of the people of Hong Kong and respects the "One Country Two Systems" model. The leadership in China and Hong Kong is in no doubt about the strength of UK concern, and our commitment to seeing the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration upheld.

■ Hong Kong: Politics and Government**Sarah Champion:** [\[1368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the (a) Hong Kong Chief Executive and (b) representatives of the

Chinese Government on the Open Letter to Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam signed by 44 Parliamentarians and public figures from 18 countries.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

The Foreign Secretary has discussed our concerns directly with both the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam and to the Chinese Foreign Minister, State Councillor Wang Yi. The Foreign Secretary has used these opportunities to reiterate the UK position that meaningful and effective political dialogue is the only way to resolve the situation. Since the District Council elections in November, senior officials have remained in regular contact with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government and the authorities in Beijing. The leadership in China and Hong Kong is in no doubt about the strength of UK concern over the current situation in Hong Kong, and our commitment to seeing the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration upheld.

■ **Iran: USA**

Royston Smith:

[1409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help de-escalate tensions between Iran and the US.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

Following the death of Qasem Soleimani, we urged all parties to de-escalate tensions and find a diplomatic way through the crisis. We are clear that calls for retaliation or reprisals will lead to more violence in the region, which is in no one's interest. The Prime Minister has spoken to President Trump, President Rouhani, President Macron, Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi in recent days, and will have calls with other leaders in the coming days to encourage de-escalation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Breast Cancer: Diets**

Jim Shannon:

[1002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether there is a link between dieting and the risk of breast cancer.

Jo Churchill:

An assessment of dieting and risk of breast cancer has not been undertaken. However, the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy concluded in 1995 that greater adiposity, particularly central adiposity, and weight gain during adulthood, increase the risk of post-menopausal breast cancer. This can be viewed at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/743526/Nutritional Aspects of the Development of Cancer 1995 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/743526/Nutritional_Aspects_of_the_Development_of_Cancer_1995_.pdf)

This conclusion has been supported by high quality systematic reviews and international organisations such as the World Cancer Research Fund. This can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.wcrf.org/dietandcancer/breast-cancer>

The Government advises that having a healthy lifestyle, which includes maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active and having healthy, balanced diet, can reduce the risk of certain types of cancer, including breast cancer.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis

Hilary Benn:

[1689]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the secondary cancer diagnosis rate was for (a) Leeds and (b) England in each of the last 5 years.

Jo Churchill:

The following table lists finished admission episodes with a primary or secondary diagnosis of cancer in Leeds and England.

LEEDS		ENGLAND		
Year	Cancer	Secondary cancer	Cancer	Secondary cancer
2014-15	14,280	4,835	1,924,381	575,650
2015-16	14,795	5,245	1,999,218	623,227
2016-17	15,725	5,185	2,077,837	654,192
2017-18	15,580	5,005	2,131,848	700,014
2018-19	14,795	4,715	2,220,501	742,844

■ Cancer: Tomography

Hilary Benn:

[1690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in how many cases of secondary cancer diagnosed in each of the last five years had the patient undergone (a) a PET scan, (b) a CT scan or (c) an MRI scan prior to or during their treatment for the primary cancer in (i) Leeds and (ii) England.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not collected centrally.

Hilary Benn: [\[1691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what NHS policy is on offering (a) PET, (b) CT and (c) MRI scans to patients undergoing treatment for primary cancer in order to identify whether they have any secondary cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The optimal staging of cancers by use of Computerized Tomography (CT), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) or Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scanning, either individually or in combination, varies between cancer types and is guided by clinical consensus, professional guidelines and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence publications.

■ **Colonoscopy: Water****Jim Shannon:** [\[1003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when water infusion for colonoscopy will be available on the NHS.

Caroline Dinenge:

The use of water infusion for colonoscopy in the National Health Service is a clinical decision as to what is the best procedure for the individual patient.

■ **Continuing Care****Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[1673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ensure that a rapidly deteriorating condition that may be entering a terminal phase under paragraph 16 of the Fast Track Pathway Tool for NHS Continuing Healthcare is interpreted to exclude all patients other than those confined to bed and within a few days of death; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenge:

The National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and National Health Service-funded Nursing Care sets out the policy for the use of the Fast Track Pathway Tool.

The Fast Track Pathway Tool must only be used when the individual has a rapidly deteriorating condition and may be entering a terminal phase.

The completed Fast Track Pathway Tool should be supported by a prognosis, where available. However, strict time limits that base eligibility on a specified expected length of life remaining should not be imposed:

- 'rapidly deteriorating' should not be interpreted narrowly as only meaning an anticipated specific or short time frame of life remaining; and

- 'may be entering a terminal phase' is not intended to be restrictive to only those situations where death is imminent.

■ Dementia: Children

Jim Shannon:

[\[1015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the prevalence of childhood dementia.

Caroline Dinenage:

Dementia in children is exceptionally rare. If a 'dementia' developed during childhood, it is likely to be an inherited disease which would have implications for whether a clear diagnosis of dementia could be made.

Childhood dementia stems from several different groups of complex neurological diseases such as Niemann-Pick disease type-C, Batten disease and Mucopolysaccharide diseases. In the case of Batten disease for example, it is estimated to affect 25-40 children in England.

In September 2019, NHS England announced National Health Service funding for the treatment of Batten disease with access to a drug called Cerliponase alfa known to slow down onset and extend the child's life.

We continue to implement the 2013 UK Strategy for Rare Diseases which contains 51 high level commitments to improve the lives of those with a rare disease or condition.

■ Dementia: Football

Jim Shannon:

[\[1011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with football associations on former footballers and the diagnosis of dementia.

Caroline Dinenage:

We have had no discussions with football associations on this issue.

■ Eating Disorders

Jim Shannon:

[\[996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with eating disorders in the last five years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The following tables show the number of people referred to specialist secondary mental health services with a primary diagnosis of eating disorders from 2014/15 to 2015/16, and the number of people referred to specialist secondary mental health services with a primary reason for referral of eating disorders from 2016/17 to 2018/19.

YEAR	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
2014/15	4,513
2015/16	3,895

Source: NHS Digital Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Data Set (MHLDDS)

YEAR	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
2016/17	11,207
2017/18	18,224
2018/19	22,336

Source: NHS Digital: Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS)

The MHSDS replaced the MHLDDS in January 2016. Methods of counting activity in mental health services are different between the two data sets. The changes in numbers reported therefore reflect changes in the data set. For example, the MHLDDS covered mental health services for adults only, but the MHSDS includes children's and young peoples' mental health services.

There are two matters to consider when looking at the MHSDS data:

- Diagnosis recording is known to be low. Of the people in contact with these services on 31 October 2018, for example, a diagnosis was recorded for only 22.3% of people. Therefore, the number of people with a primary reason for referral of 'eating disorders' for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 is provided, rather a count of people diagnosed with an eating disorder.
- There is a year-on-year increase in the number of providers submitting to the MHSDS, with 85 submitting data in April 2016, 108 in March 2018, and then 171 in March 2019. Therefore, the figures shown, including for 2018/19, are known to be incomplete at England level.

■ Eating Disorders: Health Services

Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to January 2020 NHS Digital figures showing an increase in hospital admissions for eating disorders, what steps he is taking to (a) prevent people from developing those disorders and (b) support people in those situations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Early intervention is beneficial for all mental health conditions. Our Green Paper on transforming children and young people's mental health provision has the potential to

significantly improve early intervention and prevention, which can help prevent problems continuing into or developing in adulthood.

The Government recognise that poor body image is a common problem and in most extreme cases can lead to eating disorders. This is why the Government has delivered a broad programme on body image which has included work with the advertising industry to develop young peoples' ability to evaluate the images and messages they encounter in the media.

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan's investment of an extra £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24, eating disorder services for all ages are being ramped-up across the country. This Government has invested £150 million over five years since 2014, to expand eating disorder community-based care for children and young people and we have seen positive results, with an increase in the total number receiving effective treatment in the community from around 5,000 in 2016/17 to over 7,500 in 2018/19. At least three in four children are now starting treatment within one week if urgent and four weeks if non-urgent.

■ **Fertility: Females**

Jim Shannon:

[\[995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support women with fertility problems.

Caroline Dinenge:

The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment, is, and has been since the 1990s, a matter for local healthcare commissioners. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services including fertility services that meet the needs of their whole population.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's guidance for commissioners is a new tool to help them implement the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) fertility guidelines.

The Government's position is that CCGs should be following the NICE fertility guidelines as part of their National Health Service service offer to local people. On 17 June 2019, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health, Inequalities and Suicide Prevention (Jackie Doyle-Price MP) wrote to the Chief Executives of all CCGs in England to promote the guidance and benchmark price, and strongly encourage them to implement the NICE fertility guidelines in full.

■ **General Practitioners: Rural Areas**

Jim Shannon:

[\[1014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of GPs in rural constituencies.

Jo Churchill:

The Government wants everyone to be able to access a primary care professional when they need to. The actions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, backed by the extra £4.5 billion of investment in primary and community care by 2023/24, and the five-year contract framework for general practice, are already being implemented and will build the general practice workforce and improve access to primary care services. The full People Plan will set out a broader strategy for growing the workforce by 6,000 more doctors in general practice through recruitment and retention programmes.

Current schemes include the Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme, a £20,000 one-off payment that attracts general practitioner (GP) trainees to parts of the country where there have been consistent shortages of GP trainees, including rural communities. 276 places are available in 2020/21.

Health Services: Shropshire

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse has been of the Future Fit work to reconfigure health services in Shropshire.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many months behind schedule the Future Fit reconfiguration of health services is in Shropshire.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the added cost is in terms of inflation of every annual delay into starting the Future Fit reconfiguration of services in Shropshire.

Edward Argar:

The resource cost incurred on the reconfiguration work at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust, which would have a cost to the public purse, borne by the Trust is not held centrally. The overall capital cost of the scheme is still being developed for the business case and costing includes a contingency for foreseeable cost increases, such as inflation. The preferred option in the Future Fit process will only be determined when the Strategic Outline Case is finalised and approved. The Strategic Outline Case is currently being considered by the Trust board and a draft version has been shared with the local clinical commissioning groups and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

For any capital scheme of this nature it is accepted that inflationary changes occur. Any increase in cost would apply to all options that were considered prior to consultation.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Rachael Maskell: [1768]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that gay and bisexual men in York Central constituency have access to places on the PrEP Impact Trial.

Rachael Maskell: [1769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with YorSexualHealth, Monkgate Health Centre that is not currently recruiting gay and bisexual men on the PrEP impact trial.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not had discussions with Monkgate Health Centre on participation in the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial.

Participation in the trial is on a voluntary basis and it is for clinics and local authorities to decide the number of allocated places they can accept. The PrEP Impact Trial website includes a map showing the distribution of the 154 clinics level 3 Sexual Health Services participating in the trial at the following link:

www.prepimpacttrial.org.uk

■ Hysteroscopy: Finance

Ms Lyn Brown: [393]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if NHS Improvement will remove the financial incentive for outpatient hysteroscopy procedures within the proposed National Tariff Payment System 2020-21.

Ms Lyn Brown: [394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the inclusion of a financial incentive for outpatient hysteroscopy procedures within the National Tariff Payment System on the incidence of (a) severe pain during hysteroscopy and (b) women discouraged from taking up diagnostic hysteroscopy as a result of fear of severe pain due to the procedure.

Caroline Dinéage:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for the design of the National Tariff. Any changes to tariff are made following significant engagement with stakeholders throughout the sector. The final changes are consulted on alongside an assessment of the potential impact to providers and patients.

The current statutory consultation on the 2020/21 tariff is open until midnight on Wednesday 22 January. The document considers changes to outpatient tariffs to support the delivery of the Long Term Plan, including outpatient transformation.

Hysteroscopy is covered by the outpatient procedures best practice tariff (BPT). The aim of the BPT is to encourage procedures in an outpatient setting, where clinically

appropriate. Outpatient procedures provide the patient with a quicker recovery, as well as allowing them to recuperate at home and get back to work and daily life sooner. The National Health Service in England does not collect data on the incidence of severe pain during hysteroscopy or women discouraged from taking up diagnostic hysteroscopy as a result of fear of severe pain due to the procedure.

■ Hysteroscopy: Pain

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will include outpatient hysteroscopy and the issue of uncontrolled pain for women on the agenda of a meeting of the Women's Health Taskforce for England within the next six months.

Caroline Dinenage:

Outpatient Hysteroscopy is an important topic, and we are open to discussing it at a future meeting of the Women's Health Taskforce. It is not currently on the agenda for the next Women's Health Taskforce meeting.

■ Joint Replacements: Waiting Lists

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[1737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people waited for more than 18 weeks from referral to treatment for (a) hip replacement and (b) knee replacements by NHS Hospital Trust from April 2018 to March 2019.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[1738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people waited for more than 52 weeks from referral to treatment for (a) hip replacement and (b) knee replacements by NHS Hospital Trust from April 2018 to March 2019.

Edward Argar:

A count of finished admission episodes with a main operative procedure of hip replacement and knee replacement with treatment waiting times of over 18 weeks and 52 weeks in 2018-19 by National Health Service hospital trust is attached. This is a count of admissions, not patients as the same patient may have had more than one admission within the same time period.

Attachments:

1. pq1737 38 table [pq1737 38 table.xlsx]

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[1739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people waiting for joint replacement surgery have exercised their right to an alternative provider from April 2018 to March 2019 by NHS Hospital Trust.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not collected centrally.

■ Learning Disabilities Mortality Review Programme

Barbara Keeley: [\[1707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the backlog of unreviewed cases in the LeDer process.

Barbara Keeley: [\[1708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the increasing backlog of LeDer cases to be reviewed, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of the LeDer process.

Caroline Dinage:

Our assessment is that over the past 12 months, the Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) programme has made good progress in completing reviews, providing the largest body of evidence of deaths of people with a learning disability at an individual level anywhere in the world and using that evidence to turn learning into action to drive improvements in healthcare.

By December 2019, the latest date for which information is available, 3,195 reviews had been completed. There are also a further 1,923 reviews currently in progress. The total number of deaths notified to the Programme at December 2019 was 7,145 of which 3,060 had been notified in the last 12 months.

Unallocated reviews do not necessarily equate to a backlog as not all will have exceeded the standard for completion, which is within six months of a death being notified to the Programme. As a proportion of the total number of notifications to the Programme, unallocated reviews have reduced from 39% in November 2018 to 28% in December 2019. NHS England expect that, by the end of 2020, every clinical commissioning group (CCG) will be in a position to conclude all reviews within six months where it is appropriate to do so.

In May 2019, NHS England announced an additional £5 million investment in 2019/20 to address the backlog of unreviewed cases and increase the pace in which cases are allocated and reviewed in timely way. Monies have been allocated to CCGs and to the Commissioning Support Unit and is being invested in developing a dedicated workforce to carry out reviews and to develop systems and processes to embed quality improvement activity across the health and social care system. More than 2,000 experts have now been trained to undertake reviews.

■ Leukaemia

Jim Shannon:

[\[1010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were diagnosed with leukaemia in the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The attached table shows the number of people diagnosed with leukaemia in England from 2013 to 2017.

Attachments:

1. Leukaemia diagnosed in England 2013-2017 [pq1010 leukaemia england 13-17.docx]

■ Motor Neurone Disease: Physiotherapy

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people suffering from motor neurone disease have access to physiotherapy.

Caroline Dinenage:

This information is not available.

■ Myeloma

Jim Shannon:

[\[1009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were diagnosed with myeloma in the last five years by (a) age range and (b) gender.

Jo Churchill:

The following table shows the number of people diagnosed with multiple myeloma and malignant plasma cell neoplasms in England from 2013 to 2017, by age and gender:

							FEMALE TOTAL
-	FEMALE						
-	0-24	25-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	
2013	0	114	232	511	670	649	2,176
2014	3	112	234	452	661	677	2,139
2015	2	85	241	452	622	624	2,026
2016	0	99	246	469	639	636	2,089
2017	0	119	257	464	648	615	2,103
Totals	5	529	1,210	2,348	3,240	3,201	10,533
-	Male						Male Total

-	FEMALE						FEMALE TOTAL
-	0-24	25-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	
2013	3	169	307	677	982	763	2,901
2014	1	137	328	687	822	738	2,713
2015	1	144	355	700	889	694	2,783
2016	2	133	343	675	930	709	2,792
2017	1	142	386	687	960	755	2,931
Totals	8	725	1,719	3,426	4,583	3,659	14,120

-	PERSONS						PERSONS TOTAL
-	0-24	25-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	
2013	3	283	539	1,188	1,652	1,412	5,077
2014	4	249	562	1,139	1,483	1,415	4,852
2015	3	229	596	1,152	1,511	1,318	4,809
2016	2	232	589	1,144	1,569	1,345	4,881
2017	1	261	643	1,151	1,608	1,370	5,034
Totals	13	1,254	2,929	5,774	7,823	6,860	24,653

■ Myeloma: Health Services and Research

Tracey Crouch:

[\[978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to reevaluate funding for Myeloma (a) care and (b) research under the NHS Long Term Plan.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England has committed funding of over £1.3 billion over the next five years to deliver the commitments on cancer in the NHS Long Term Plan. These commitments include:

- Speeding up the path from innovation to business-as-usual, spreading proven new techniques and technologies and reducing variation; and

- By 2021, where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer will have access to personalised care, including needs assessment, a care plan and health and wellbeing information and support.

In September 2019 we announced funding of £200 million for new equipment to drive earlier diagnosis of cancer and improve survival. More than 300 diagnostic machines will be funded across the country, replacing outdated MRI machines, CT scans and breast screening equipment with cutting edge technology. The new machines will be “AI-enabled” to keep pace with future advances in technology

Research is crucial in the fight against cancer. That is why the Department invests £1billion per year in health research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). In 2017/18 NIHR cancer research expenditure was £136 million, which constitutes the largest investment in a disease area.

■ **Organs: Donors**

Imran Hussain:

[\[490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the final wishes of people in relation to organ donation in the absence of a decision recorded on the NHS Organ Donation Register following the transition to an opt-out system.

Caroline Dinenage:

The new consent arrangements for organ and tissue donation that the Government aims to introduce from spring 2020, known as ‘opt-out’ or ‘deemed consent’, mean that all adults over 18 will be considered potential organ and tissue donors after death, unless they make a decision that they do not want to be a donor, they have nominated a representative to make a decision on their behalf after death, or are in an excluded group.

A decision either to donate or to not donate organs and tissues can be made by recording a decision on the Organ Donor Register, or in other ways, both written and verbal, including telling your family.

Under the new arrangements, the family of the deceased will continue to be consulted and they will still be able to provide information about their loved one's wishes. If they have information that their loved one would not have wanted to donate their organs, organ donation will not go ahead.

■ **Ovarian Cancer: Health Education**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what national public awareness campaigns have been run to increase awareness of ovarian cancer in the last 12 months; and what steps his Department is taking to improve public awareness of ovarian cancer.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has run several Be Clear on Cancer (BCOC) campaigns to help improve early detection of cancer. PHE has not run a national public awareness campaign on ovarian cancer in the last 12 months. However, in 2014 PHE ran a regional ovarian cancer campaign and, in 2017, a pilot which focussed on a range of abdominal symptoms, such as diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort that can be indicative of several cancers, including ovarian cancer.

PHE is currently undertaking new data analysis and research to determine the future direction of BCOC campaign activity and will take into consideration the outcomes of these campaigns. Further information on the BCOC campaigns can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer_type_and_topic_specific_work/topic_specific_work/be_clear_on_cancer/

Decisions on which cancers BCOC campaigns should focus on are informed by a steering group with representatives from PHE, the Department, NHS England, primary and secondary care clinicians, and key voluntary sector organisations. These decisions are under constant review, informed by the available data and medical information resources.

■ Prostate Cancer: Dairy Products**Jim Shannon:****[1012]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of a potential link between dairy diets and prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

There has not been a specific assessment of any association between dairy product consumption and prostate cancer. However, dairy products are one of the main contributors to saturated fat intakes in adults. In 2019, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) published their review of the evidence on saturated fats and health. SACN concluded that there was no association between saturated fat intake and prostate cancer. The review is available to view at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/saturated-fats-and-health-sacn-report>

International consideration of any association between prostate cancer and dairy products has concluded that the evidence is limited.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists**Jonathan Ashworth:****[1735]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time was for trauma and orthopaedic surgery in each NHS Foundation Trust in each month in 2018-19.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[1736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for Trauma and Orthopaedic surgery in the 12 NHS Trusts participating in the field test programme as part of the interim review of clinically-led access standards.

Edward Argar:

The average (median) waiting time for trauma and orthopaedic surgery in each National Health Service foundation trust in each month in 2018-19 is attached.

The average (median) waiting time for trauma and orthopaedic surgery in the NHS trusts participating in the field test programme as part of the interim review of clinically-led access standards is available in the following table:

PROVIDER CODE	PROVIDER NAME	NOVEMBER 2019 AVERAGE (MEDIAN) WAITING TIME (IN WEEKS)
R1H	Barts Health NHS Trust	9.58
RP4	Great Ormond Street Hospital - for Children NHS Foundation Trust	-
RA7	University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust	6.98
RBA	Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	10.53
RTP	Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	6.43
RKB	University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust	9.30
RNS	Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust	7.56
RD8	Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	10.81
RET	The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust	-
RXR	East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	5.66
RCD	Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	10.00

PROVIDER CODE	PROVIDER NAME	NOVEMBER 2019 AVERAGE (MEDIAN) WAITING TIME (IN WEEKS)
RWY	Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust	6.75

Attachments:

1. PQ1735 36 table [Data for PQ1735.xlsx]

■ Testicular Cancer

Jim Shannon:

[\[997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with testicular cancer in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The following table shows the number of males diagnosed with testicular cancer in England from 2013 to 2017:

YEAR	INCIDENCE
2013	1,979
2014	2,024
2015	1,940
2016	1,983
2017	1,854

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Employment

Catherine West:

[\[1776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants were granted permission to work in the UK in 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

The data requested on the number of asylum seekers granted permission to work in 2019 is only held on paper case files or within the notes sections of the Home Office's databases. This information is not held in a reportable format and to obtain it would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold.

■ Asylum: Families

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[1702]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many travel documents were issued to beneficiaries of international protection by the UK in 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of travel documents issued to those people who are not British and cannot use or get a passport.

Information correct to August 2019 can be accessed via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-august-2019>

Table TD01. Information regarding eligibility for travel documents can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-home-office-travel-document>.

■ Asylum: Housing

Catherine West:

[1775]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many residents were accommodated in each asylum reception centre in the UK at the end of 2019.

Victoria Atkins:

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute can apply for free accommodation and cash support to cover their essential living needs whilst their cases are considered. If they have an emergency need for accommodation they can ask to be put in initial accommodation whilst their support applications are being processed (asylum seekers receive section 98 support while in initial accommodation).

Quarterly data, correct as to September 2019, regarding the number of residents in initial accommodation is included in the published statistics at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2019/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to#support-provided-to-asylum-seekers>

The Home Office does not publish data for each separate initial accommodation.

■ Bail

Louise Haigh:

[419]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on her Department's review of pre-charge bail legislation; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

This government is fully committed to protecting the public, and ensuring the police have the powers they need.

On 5 November the government announced its intention to review pre-charge bail legislation to ensure we have a system which more effectively prioritises the safety of victims and witnesses and the management of suspects.

■ Crimes of Violence

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[1787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the trends in the level of violent crime in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

Data collected by police forces in England and Wales shows that there has been an increase in rates of robbery, knife possession, offences with a knife or sharp instrument and offences involving violence against an individual. See table below for exact statistics:

PUBLISHED DATA - SELECTED VIOLENT OFFENCES [1] RECORDED BY THE POLICE IN ENGLAND AND WALES: % CHANGE YEAR TO JUNE 2019 COMPARED WITH:

England & Wales	Year to June 2010	Year to June 2018	Year to June 2019	Year to June 2010	Year to Mar 2018
Robbery	74,888	79,164	87,361	17	10
Homicide	628	719	681	8	-5
Knife possessions	10,652	18,879	22,962	116	22
Violence against the person offences	693,632	1,469,727	1,655,146	139	13
Offences with a knife or sharp instrument excluding West Midlands, Sussex and Greater Manchester Police[2] [3]	27,319	37,281	39,504	45	6

[1] The selected offences are: homicide, attempted murder, threats to kill, assault with intent to cause serious harm, assault with injury, & robbery.

[2] West Midlands and Sussex police force included unbroken bottle and glass offences in their returns prior to year ending March 2011 but have excluded these

offences in line with other forces since then. As such, they need to be excluded when comparing with years prior to 2010/11.

[3] Data from Greater Manchester Police are excluded. This force reviewed their recording of knife or sharp instrument offences in December 2017. This revealed that they were under-counting these offences. Following this review, there has been a sharp increase in the number of knife or sharp instrument offences recorded by GMP in 2018 compared with previous years. Previous data have not been revised and the data are therefore not comparable. Due to this, data from GMP have been excluded from the table.

About half the rise in knife/gun crime and robbery is thought to be due to improvements in police recording. However, we know from our analysis of the drivers of serious violence that the drugs market is also a major factor contributing to the increase in the rates of these crimes.

Violent crime has a devastating impact on victims, families and the wider community. That is why we are giving the police the resources and tools they need to keep families, communities and our country safe; this includes recruiting 20,000 new police officers and making it easier for them to use stop and search powers.

Funding for policing is also increasing by £1 billion this year, including council tax and the £100million Serious Violence Fund. This Fund is providing the critical investment needed in the 18 police forces worst affected by serious violence; such as providing £63.4 million towards surge operational activity, such as increased patrols, and £1.6 million to help improve the quality of data on serious violence, particularly knife crime, to support planning and operations. £35 million was invested in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) which form a key component of our action to prevent violence by understanding its root causes. A further £35 million has been announced for VRUs for 2020/21.

We are also bringing forward the Serious Violence Bill which will aim to prevent and reduce serious violence by creating a new duty (and extending an existing duty) on public sector bodies to collaborate and plan with each other to prevent and reduce serious violence.

■ David Duckenfield

Sir Christopher Chope:

[1675]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the estimated cost to the police service in England is of each of the three trials of David Duckenfield on charges of manslaughter arising from the Hillsborough tragedy and the work preparatory to those trials.

Kit Malthouse:

The overall cost of Operation Resolve, the police-led investigation into the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, is estimated at £61.5 million since it was established in 2012.

Since charges were first brought in June 2017, the cost of Operation Resolve has been £15.2 million (including £3 million of estimated costs in 2019/20). The Home Office does not hold disaggregated data for the cost of each of the trials themselves, nor does it hold data pertaining to the costs of proceedings prior to Operation Resolve, as these were not sponsored by the Home Office.

■ EU Nationals: Immigration

Catherine West:

[\[1420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to provide physical documentation for EU nationals with settled status to ensure they do not experience discrimination from prospective (a) employers and (b) landlords.

Brandon Lewis:

The Home Office's intention is that EU citizens granted status under the EU settlement scheme will evidence their status and entitlements through digital means via online services. This will provide a simpler and more secure means to establish a person's status and there are no plans to provide EU citizens with physical documents for this purpose.

The law is clear that employers and landlords should not discriminate when conducting statutory right to work and right to rent checks, and this is reinforced in statutory codes of practice issued by the Home Office.

EU citizens will be required to use the online service to evidence that they have status under the scheme when moving jobs or accommodation after the new immigration system is introduced. In the meantime, they can continue to rely on their national passports or identity documents. Anyone who believes that they have been discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, by an employer, or landlord, because of their race may bring a complaint before an Employment Tribunal, or an Industrial Tribunal in Northern Ireland.

"Race" is one of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and the legal term incorporates colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins. When we consider the risk of discrimination by employers and landlords towards foreign nationals in the context of right to work and right to rent checks, race is the relevant protected characteristics we're focusing on. Moreover, the Home Office has issued two statutory codes of practice for employers and landlords under the Immigration Acts setting out how they should avoid committing acts of unlawful race discrimination when conducting right to work and right to rent checks. The term race is explicitly used in both statutory codes.

■ Fires: Australia

Julian Knight:

[\[474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to use UK fire resources to assist Australia in tackling the bushfires in that country.

Kit Malthouse:

Our High Commission and Consulates General are maintaining close contact with Australian authorities at federal and state level, exploring how the UK can support them and what assistance they would find most useful.

An initial expert team of specialists from defence, fire and health has been sent to Australia, as announced in the statement to the House on 9 January by Heather Wheeler, Minister for Asia and the Pacific. Its members have been working with Australian counterparts to establish what further UK support will be of most use to Australian emergency responders, and ensure that such contributions are fully integrated into the Australian response.

■ Immigrants: Health Services**Seema Malhotra:**[\[1740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on the charging of the immigration health surcharge to people that are victims of sex trafficking and that have successfully applied for leave to remain.

Victoria Atkins:

There is a specific exemption from the requirement to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge for individuals making immigration applications which relate to the person's identification as a victim of slavery, including victims of sex trafficking.

This ensures that victims of this horrendous crime are not prevented from seeking leave to remain by the cost of making an application. Separately, NHS regulations make clear that those identified as a victim of human trafficking are not subject to overseas visitor charges.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Deidre Brock:**[\[409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to vary the EU Settlement Scheme to guarantee EU citizens' right to remain in the UK.

Brandon Lewis:

The EU Settlement Scheme already provides resident EU citizens with the UK immigration status they will need to continue living here after the end of the implementation period on 31 December 2020. The status granted under the scheme will guarantee them the same rights to work, study and access benefits and services as they have now.

■ Immigration: Windrush Generation**Deidre Brock:**[\[410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications there have been to the Windrush Scheme; what proportion of those applications resulted in

documentation being supplied free of charge; and how many people have received British citizenship free of charge under the Windrush Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary provides the Home Affairs Select Committee with updates on the work of the department in connection with Windrush. This includes information on decisions made by the Taskforce under the Windrush Scheme. The correspondence can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/correspondence-on-the-work-of-the-home-office-windrush>

The published Windrush guidance confirms what documentation is provided to the applicant dependent on the individual's circumstances, and that there is no charge for an application under the Windrush Scheme. The guidance can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807384/windrush-scheme-v3.0-ext.pdf

■ **National Police Chiefs' Council: Disclosure of Information**

Louise Haigh:

[488]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many requests his Department has made to the National Police Chiefs Council for data outside the normal reporting rules since July 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Secretary has statutory powers under the Police Act 1996 to request data directly from Chief Constables of police forces in England and Wales.

In exercising those powers, the Home Office consults with the National Police Chiefs Council to ensure it is feasible for police forces to supply such data and would not add a disproportionate burden on forces to do so.

Since July 2019, data already collected by forces as part of their own internal management information has been requested in relation to several of the Government's priorities including tackling serious violence and recruiting 20,000 additional police officers.

■ **Police**

Louise Haigh:

[423]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on establishing a Police Covenant; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has set out a vision for a new Police Covenant, recognising the bravery and commitment of officers who work night and day to keep us safe. The covenant will focus on physical protection for officers, their health and wellbeing and support for their families.

The Home Office has been developing the detail of our proposals and continue to work with policing partners and stakeholders as they are finalised.

The government intends to launch a consultation on the principle and scope of the covenant shortly. The consultation will inform the drafting of the Police Protection and Powers Bill, which was announced in the Queen's speech and will put the covenant on a legislative footing.

■ Police Pursuits

Louise Haigh:

[\[421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals on police pursuits; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

As announced in the Queens Speech in December 2019, the Government will bring forward a Police Powers and Protection Bill to ensure that police officers are provided with the protections and powers they need to keep the population safe.

On pursuits, the Bill will introduce a new test to assess the standard of driving of a police officer so that their skills and training can be taken into account should there be any subsequent investigations into their actions.

■ Police: Private Sector

Louise Haigh:

[\[422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the powers are of private security firms contracted by public authorities to carry out policing duties; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

Private security firms do not have police powers. Core police powers like arrest will always be reserved for police constables and other special forces.

While core powers are reserved for police and other special forces, the legislation does permit Chief Constables to establish and maintain "community safety accreditation schemes" in consultation with local authorities. This power also enables Chief Constables to confer upon accredited non-police staff, including security officers employed by accredited firms, a range of powers, including the issuing of fixed penalty notices, in order to help maintain community safety and security.

Any individual private security operative must be licensed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

■ Police: Recruitment

Louise Haigh:

[\[420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many frontline police officers will be recruited to local police forces in (a) 2020, (b) 2021 and (c) 2022; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is delivering on the people's priorities by putting 20,000 extra police officers on the streets over the next three years. Up to 6,000 additional officers will be recruited in the first wave and will be shared among the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. Force allocations for year one can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-announces-first-wave-of-20000-police-officer-uplift>

Mr Stephen Morgan: [464]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure the police recruitment process is based upon skills directly relevant to those required by the role.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [465]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to increase the support available to people wishing to become police officers but who do not meet the entry requirements.

Mr Stephen Morgan: [466]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve the police recruitment process to increase diversity within UK police forces.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to delivering the people's priorities including the recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers over the next three years.

Police officer entry requirements are set by the College of Policing. The Home Office is working with the National Police Chiefs Council, the College of Policing and forces to ensure there are no undue barriers for anyone who is qualified to do so from joining the police. New entry routes introduced by the College of Policing have been designed to equip officers with the skills they need for modern policing. The new training curriculum includes cyber-enabled crime, vulnerability and risk, well-being and resilience, criminology and crime prevention. Many forces are already using these new entry routes.

While the police workforce is more representative in terms of gender and ethnicity than it has ever been, there is still much more to be done. We have been clear that the uplift in officers is an important opportunity to improve diversity. However, recruitment is not the only way in which Forces can improve equality and diversity. Retention and progression also play a crucial role, particularly in enabling officers and staff to move into more senior and more specialised ranks and roles.

■ Refugees: Children**Christine Jardine:** [1426]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many unaccompanied child refugees have been resettled in the UK from elsewhere in Europe under Section 67 of the

Immigration Act 2016 in (a) total and (b) in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018, (iv) 2019 and (v) 2020 to date.

Christine Jardine:

[1427]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the Government has not yet fulfilled its duty under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 to relocate 480 unaccompanied child refugees to the UK from elsewhere in Europe.

Christine Jardine:

[1428]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to fulfil the UK's duty under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 to relocate 480 unaccompanied child refugees to the UK from elsewhere in Europe.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government remains fully committed to relocating the specified number of 480 unaccompanied children to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the Dubs Amendment) as soon as possible. Over 220 children were transferred to the UK under section 67 when the Calais camp was cleared in late 2016. Since then we have been making further progress with participating States, France, Greece and Italy, to refer more eligible children to move closer to achieving this commitment. We will publish further data on the transfers once we have fulfilled this commitment.

Meeting our obligations under section 67 is a complex task which has involved negotiating separate referral and transfer arrangements with each of the three participating States. These arrangements are crucial to the process and must operate within the confines of the participating States' domestic legislation and policy.

The transfer of children is also dependent on the availability of appropriate local authority care placements. The Government is very grateful to local authorities who have offered placements for these children as well as those who continue to look after large numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). The availability of placements for children arriving under section 67 has been affected by two issues. Firstly, by the high numbers of UASC who have arrived in the UK spontaneously in recent years – for example, in 2018, the UK received 3,063 asylum claims from unaccompanied children. This follows previous years which have seen similarly high numbers of unaccompanied children arriving in the UK – 3,254 in 2015, 3,290 in 2016 and 2,401 in 2017. According to the latest Department for Education statistics, there are more than 5,000 UASC in English local authorities alone – the highest figure in at least 10 years. Secondly, during this period, there has been increasing numbers of resident looked-after children being taken into local authority care, which has placed further pressure on local authorities.

Against this background, local authorities have continued to provide offers and the Government has made good progress towards meeting its obligations under section 67.

■ South Wales Police: Finance**Stephen Doughty:****[310]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much additional funding has been allocated to South Wales Police for tackling knife crime and serious violence in the last 12 months.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to tackling knife crime and serious violence and making our streets safer.

South Wales Police will benefit from being able to recruit 136 officers by the end of March 2021. This is in addition to the £290.3m in funding South Wales Police are receiving in 2019/20 an increase of £19.3m on 2018/19.

In the last 12 months South Wales Police has been provided with £2,080,000 from the Serious Violence Fund; £1,200,00 for surge operational funding and £880,000 to develop their Violence Prevention Unit. £1,211,542 has also been awarded to support projects across all of Wales from the Early Intervention Youth Fund.

Additionally, funding has been awarded from the Anti-knife Community Fund and the Youth Endowment Fund to projects covering South Wales. For more information see:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844955/Anti_knife_crime_successful_bids_2019-20.csv/preview

<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/grantees-and-programmes/>

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Buildings: Insulation****Mr Steve Reed:****[1750]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has undertaken an impact assessment on a complete ban on combustible building materials.

Esther McVey:

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

The Department is currently undertaking this review and will report shortly.

■ Empty Property: North West

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[1693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many houses in (a) Wallasey constituency and (b) the North West were unoccupied in 2019.

Esther McVey:

Statistics on vacant dwellings in England and in each local authority district are published in the Department's live table 615 which is available at the following link. This table shows the annual total numbers of empty homes and those vacant longer than six months and also vacants in the local authority, housing association and other public sector tenures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

Statistics on vacant dwellings at parliamentary constituency level are not centrally collected. Statistics for 2019 are scheduled to be published in Spring 2020.

■ Flats: Fire Prevention

Mr Steve Reed: [\[1749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information his department holds on the number and proportion of privately owned apartment blocks where remedial fire safety works are being undertaken following safety checks following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Esther McVey:

The latest information on remediation progress in privately owned high-rise buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material cladding can be found in the Building Safety Programme monthly data release. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-monthly-data-release-november-2019>

■ High Rise Flats: Safety

Mr Steve Reed: [\[1746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 117, on High Rise Flats: Safety, how many of the 9000 emails had been replied to by his Department as of November 2019.

Esther McVey:

The Department is unable to provide the specific information requested as it is not readily accessible.

Mr Steve Reed: [1747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 117, on High Rise Flats: Safety, where the purpose of the Housing Checks inbox was first set out.

Esther McVey:

As noted in the answer to Parliamentary Question 117 on 7 January 2020, following the Grenfell fire the Housing Checks mailbox was established to allow local authorities (LAs) and housing associations (HAs) to report their stock of buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Cladding. This mailbox and its purpose was first set out in a letter from our Permanent Secretary to LA Chief Executives and HA Chief Executives on 18 June 2017 which can be found [here](#).

Mr Steve Reed: [1748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 117, on High Rise Flats: Safety, if he will publish the categories of the type of emails received by the Housing Checks inbox.

Esther McVey:

The Department is unable to provide the specific information requested as it is not readily accessible.

■ Leasehold: Reform

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [1788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislation to reform leasehold.

Esther McVey:

The Government is committed to making the leasehold market fairer for consumers. We are moving forward with legislation on leasehold reform which will include measures to ban the sale of new leasehold houses, restrict ground rents to zero for future leases, and close loopholes to prevent unfair evictions.

■ Planning Permission: Milford on Sea

Sir Desmond Swayne: [940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for a decision to be made on the application by the Rt. Hon. Member for New Forest West to revoke the planning permission in relation to Milford on Sea 1.

Esther McVey:

A timeframe for when the decision will be issued is unknown as the request is still under consideration.

■ Street Cleaning

Barbara Keeley:

[\[1706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the level of funding allocated to local government on the ability of local authorities to maintain street cleaning services.

Luke Hall:

[Holding answer 14 January 2020]: Street cleaning is delivered through the Local Governance Finance Settlement, however responsibility for the policy is owned by DEFRA. Funding is delivered on a non-ringfenced basis through the Settlement, which gives local authorities maximum flexibility to deliver services as they see fit according to local needs. We recognise the vital role Local Government plays and this is why they will receive an additional £2.9 billion next year, the largest increase in spending power in almost a decade.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees

Catherine West:

[\[1774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Australian bush fires and the climate emergency, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of barring UK Export Finance from providing credit for businesses investing in fossil fuels.

Conor Burns:

Tackling climate change and supporting the transition away from dependence on high greenhouse gas emitting energy sources is a priority for Government. As the world transitions to a low carbon economy, there remains a need for a mix of energy sources and technologies. UK companies have an important role to play in the transition away from fossil fuels and UK Export Finance (UKEF) will remain responsive to the evolving export financing needs of UK companies during this transition.

JUSTICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[900155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

Our hard-working officers play a crucial role in keeping prisons safe and transforming offenders' lives, and ultimately make sure the public is protected.

We recognise the need to recruit and retain staff to keep our prisons secure. We have invested significantly in increasing staff numbers, recruiting an additional 4,581 (full time equivalent) prison officers between October 2016 and September 2019, surpassing our original target of 2,500. We will continue to recruit officers to ensure prisons are safe and decent.

We are giving staff the tools they need to do the job safely – rolling out PAVA incapacitant spray, and investing £100 million, as part of a wider £2.75 billion package, to fund tough airport-style security that will clamp down on the illicit items which fuel violence and hinder rehabilitation.

Matt Rodda: [\[900165\]](#)

What progress his Department has made on the sale of HMP Reading.

Lucy Frazer:

We have marketed the former HMP&YOI Reading site. We are considering all the bids received carefully.

We will always seek best value for the taxpayer when disposing of surplus property assets. The number of bids, the identity of any bidders and the nature of the bids are commercially sensitive.

Feryal Clark: [\[900166\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for Law Centres.

Wendy Morton:

We recognise the valuable work that Law Centres do in local communities around the country, and we support them in this through both grant funding and through legal aid contracts.

We are also working collaboratively with the sector to explore co-locating piloting co-located support hubs as part of work to explore new, better ways to help people resolve their issues.

My officials continue to meet regularly with representatives of law centres to discuss ways in which we can work together to enhance the breadth of legal support available to everyone in society.

Bill Wiggin: [\[900167\]](#)

What plans he has to increase the use of electronic tagging.

Lucy Frazer:

I am pleased to confirm to the Hon Gentleman that my Department completed the national roll-out across England and Wales of location monitoring GPS tags for adults in September last year. They have been well received by courts as an important additional tool to manage offenders in the community.

Building on this success, in November we began the phased roll out of GPS tags to under 18s. This will complete nationally in March this year.

To tackle offending fuelled by alcohol, we are introducing sobriety tags, increasing our electronic monitoring capabilities and our ability to manage offenders in the community effectively.

Dehenna Davison:

[\[900172\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to reduce levels of crime in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

Our prisons face a range of security challenges including supply of drugs and psychoactive substances and use of illicit phones. This fuels crime both behind and beyond the prison walls.

We are investing £100 million across the estate on airport-style security, including X-ray scanners, to stop drugs and phones from getting in.

Our previous investment in staff means prisons are making greater use body, property, cell and area searches to find contraband that gets in, aided by dedicated search teams and drug detection dogs.

And we are working closely with law enforcement to detect, disrupt and pursue the organised crime groups who drive significant amount of this criminal activity.

■ **Burglary: Sentencing**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[900163\]](#)

If he will increase the length of sentences handed down for burglary offences.

Chris Philp:

Sentencing in individual cases is a matter for our independent courts, taking into account the particular circumstances of the offence and offender, and following any relevant sentencing guidelines.

Over the last ten years, the average custodial sentence lengths for all forms of burglary have increased.

■ **County Courts: Greater Manchester**

Jim McMahon:

[\[442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many County Court hearings were cancelled in Greater Manchester in each year from 2010 to date, by reason for cancellation.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not available.

Information about cancelled hearings is not held in this form because there are many types of County Court hearing and reasons why they may not proceed. HMCTS does collect data about the numbers (not by reason) of adjourned small claims, fast track and multi track hearings and can be found at Annex A

Attachments:

1. Annex A [Annex A PQ442.docx]

David Duckenfield**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[1674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the estimated cost is to HM Courts & Tribunals Service of each of the three trials of David Duckenfield on charges of manslaughter arising from the Hillsborough tragedy; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given to PQ 31 on 7 January 2020. In relation to the cost to HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) this was a high-profile case which required additional resources to support its operation, however, the information requested is not held centrally as HMCTS does not record or allocate operating costs at individual case level and is therefore unable to provide the costs requested.

Each case held is assessed for any additional requirements needed to support the operation of the Court proceedings which are deemed a pre-requisite to ensure that a fair and equitable trial is held and access to justice maintained.

Debt Collection: Enforcement**Justin Madders:**[\[900168\]](#)

When he plans to publish his Department's response to the Review of enforcement agent (bailiff) reforms: call for evidence, which closed on 17 February 2019.

Chris Philp:

In a Statement to the House of 22 July 2019, the Government set out its initial response to the call for evidence on the enforcement agent reforms.

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

My officials have since met further with a range of stakeholders. We will respond in full to the call for evidence in due course.

Family Courts**Louise Haigh:**[\[486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the President of the Family Division in relation to transparency in the family courts.

Wendy Morton:

Ministers at the Ministry of Justice hold regular discussions with the President of the Family Division on a range of issues. The Government fully recognises that family proceedings should be as transparent as possible, and welcomes the progress that has been made towards greater openness together with the review on transparency

that the President of the Family Division is currently undertaking. Accredited media have been allowed access to certain hearings in the family courts since 2009, and in 2014 the previous President of the Family Division issued guidance leading to the increased publication of judgments. A pilot allowing legal bloggers to report on family proceedings has been running since 2018, and the current President of the Family Division published new guidance on anonymising judgments for publication in 2018 and reporting in the family courts in 2019.

Greater transparency must be weighed against the need to safeguard children and their family's privacy given the extremely sensitive information about them that the family courts often need to consider. The Government will continue to work with the senior judiciary to ensure that the right balance is struck between transparency and privacy.

■ Feltham Young Offender Institution and Wetherby Young Offender Institution

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[1021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children categorised as restricted status have been held in (a) Feltham A and (b) Wetherby prisons in each of the last five years.

Wendy Morton:

A Restricted Status prisoner is any female, young person or young adult prisoner under the age of 18, convicted or on remand, whose escape would present a serious risk to the public and who is required to be held in designated secure accommodation. Separate procedural security arrangements apply to Restricted Status prisoners.

Unlike Category A prisoners, Restricted Status prisoners do not have escape risk classifications. The designated secure accommodation and security procedures are deemed sufficient to achieve the aim of making escape impossible for these prisoners.

There have been a total of 25 Offenders categorised and held as Restricted Status in the past 5 years. Offenders are allocated between both sites;

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
HMYOI Feltham 'A'	0	1	0	4	1	7
HMYOI Wetherby	0	0	1	4	1	6

■ Ian Simms**Conor McGinn:** [\[1764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the full decision of the Parole Board in relation to the case of Ian Simms.

Lucy Frazer:

I entirely understand the distress and concern felt by Marie McCourt and her family at the Parole Board's decision to release Ian Simms, who has steadfastly refused to say what he did with Helen's body. My heartfelt sympathies remain with the McCourt family.

The independent Parole Board has published the summary of Ian Simms release. It is uncommon for the Board to publish the decisions in full as each decision contains sensitive, personal and other confidential information. Instead, the Board produces a comprehensive summary for victims and may also publish the summary publicly.

The Secretary of State applied to the Parole Board for the release decision to be reconsidered but that was unsuccessful. The Board's decision on the reconsideration application has also been published on its website.

■ Knives: Crime**Sarah Jones:** [\[900164\]](#)

What assessment he has made of trends in conviction rates for knife possession as a result of the increased use of stop and search.

Chris Philp:

Knife crime has devastating consequences on families, children and communities and this Government is determined to tackle it by whatever methods we can.

We are catching and prosecuting more people who carry a knife or offensive weapon. Those convicted of carrying knives and other weapons are more likely to go to prison and for longer than at any point in the last ten years.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Romford**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[1303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people (a) applied for and (b) were granted civil legal aid in Romford constituency in (i) 2015-16, (ii) 2016-17 and (iii) 2017-18.

Wendy Morton:

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) provides services on the basis of procurement areas not by constituencies, and we capture data on this basis. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. It may be useful to know that the LAA produces statistics that are updated quarterly and published on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/legal-aid-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019>

■ Magistrates' Courts: Greater Manchester

Jim McMahon:

[441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Magistrates' Court hearings have been cancelled in Greater Manchester in each year from 2010 to date, by reason for cancellation.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not available.

Information about cancelled hearings is not held in this form because there are many types of Magistrates' Court hearings and reasons why they may not proceed.

HMCTS does collect data about effective, cracked, ineffective and vacated trials, it is published here <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2019> and can be found in the 'Trial effectiveness at the criminal courts tool'.

■ Magistrates: Retirement

Alberto Costa:

[417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing the retirement age for magistrates to 75 years of age.

Chris Philp:

In our response to the Justice Select Committee's report on the Role of the Magistracy on 30 October 2019, we stated that we were positively considering the implications of raising the mandatory retirement age for judges and magistrates and would consult publicly on this in due course. Any change to the mandatory retirement age will require primary legislation.

■ Prisons

Grahame Morris:

[1722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress has been made on (a) reducing the level of prison violence and (b) improving the delivery of education and rehabilitation services.

Lucy Frazer:

We are taking urgent action to improve prison safety and security, alongside reforms to overhaul the system to focus on the rehabilitation of offenders. As a part of our £2.75 billion plan to transform the prison estate, we are investing £100 million to bolster security and tackle the supply of illicit items which drive prison violence and are rolling out our key worker model to provide individual support to each prisoner from a dedicated officer.

Up to £2.5 billion will be spent on creating 10,000 additional modern prison places to crack down on crime. Modern prisons provide better opportunities to reform criminals

and cut the £18 billion cost of reoffending to society each year. Newer prisons are also more efficient to run and benefit the taxpayer in the longer term.

We publish quarterly statistics on violence in prisons, which are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>

We have made important improvements to education which will boost prisoners' chances of gaining employment on release, and reduce their likelihood of reoffending.

On 1 April 2019, new prison education contracts commenced delivering services designed by Governors and their staff to best meet the specific needs of their prisoners and local labour markets. Governors can commission innovative short-term provision through a new education system. Additionally, the new Prison Education Service will build on this further by improving the range of training available to prisoners which is directly linked to real jobs on release.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Recess

Michael Fabricant: [\[1273\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of announcing all Parliamentary recesses 12 months in advance subject to the progress of House of Commons business.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

I announced recess dates, up to the conference recess, on 9 January 2020 (Official report, col. 616). As ever, recess is subject to the progress of business and the agreement of the House. Further provisional recess dates for 2020 will be announced to the House in due course. I will look to provide as much forward notice on recess dates as is possible.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry: [\[463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans he has to increase the resources of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in response to the new responsibilities that are set to be granted to it under the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill.

Stephen Farry: [\[470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he plans to increase the budget of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in order to reflect its new powers and responsibilities.

Julian Smith:

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland will play key roles in the dedicated mechanism that we are establishing, under the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, to implement our commitment to no diminution of certain rights, safeguards and equality of opportunity set out in the chapter of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement of the same name.

These new roles will require further resources to cover, inter alia, new policy and research functions and communications and education activities.

Additional resourcing will be confirmed in due course, subject to formal budgetary processes.

SCOTLAND**■ Scotland Office: Freedom of Information**

Deidre Brock: [\[411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Answer of 3 September 2019 to Question 286275 on Scotland Office: Freedom of Information, if he will take steps to ensure that all future responses to Freedom of Information requests are published.

Mr Alister Jack:

There is no obligation to publish responses to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Where requests relate to matters of wider public interest we consider publishing the responses on a case by case basis.

Deidre Brock: [\[412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Answer of 26 April 2018 to Question 136969 on Scotland Office: Freedom of Information, if he will publish his Department's review of its practices on publication of Freedom of Information responses.

Mr Alister Jack:

In 2018, the Office considered carefully whether or not it should retrospectively seek to publish online all of the responses to FOI requests since August 2014. We concluded that we did not have the resources to do so, and that the benefit to the public would not be proportionate to the cost.

■ Scotland Office: Social Media

Deidre Brock: [\[413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on social media advertising in each month since June 2019; and on which platforms that money was spent.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Department spent the following on social media advertising since June 2019:

2019-2020	TWITTER	FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
June	£1,861.02	£1,777.52	£3,638.54
July	£747.30	£807.06	£1,554.36
August	£239.60	£1,340.96	£1,580.56
September	£768.74	£595.78	£1,364.52
October	£ -	£1,924.11	£1,924.11
November	£ -	£1,307.89	£1,307.89
December	£ -	£ -	£0.00

■ Scotland Office: Travel

Deidre Brock: [\[415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the travel costs for his Department have been in each quarter since January 2018 by (a) mode of travel and use by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials.

Mr Alister Jack:

The costs incurred in each quarter for travel by Ministers and officials in the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland is enclosed.

Attachments:

1. Table - PQ 415 [Table - PQ 415.DOCX]

■ Scotland Officers: Information Officers

Deidre Brock: [\[414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Answer of 14 March 2019 to Question 230101 and the Answer of 3 September 2019 to Question 286276, for what reasons the cost of his Department's communications team rose from £108,439 in 2010-11 to £819,640.02 in 2018-19.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office is resourced to deliver all of the communications functions and activities expected and required of a Government Department in its own right and on behalf of the UK Government in Scotland. The number of staff in communications reflects this requirement.

As well as frontline communications functions, such as media handling, the Government Communications Service Modern Communications Operating Model

requires UK Government communications divisions to deliver the following functions: campaigns, digital, internal communications, strategic communications and external affairs - such as organising ministerial visits, events, committee meetings and stakeholder engagement activities.

The number of staff working at the Office is recorded in the Annual Report and Accounts, which are available online at gov.uk/scotland.

TRANSPORT

■ A34: Oxfordshire

Layla Moran:

[\[1790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 221, if he will work with Highways England and Oxfordshire County Council to bring forward the completion of the A34 Lodge Hull junction upgrade to before early 2022.

George Freeman:

Officials have been asked to facilitate discussions between Oxfordshire County Council and Highways England as they look at opportunities to help bring forward the current schedule for completion of the scheme.

■ Bus Services: North West

Barbara Keeley:

[\[1704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to protect bus routes in the North West from closure.

George Freeman:

The bus market outside London is deregulated and decisions regarding service provision is primarily a commercial matter for bus operators. Decisions on subsidised bus services are a matter for individual English local authorities, in the light of their other spending priorities.

The Department provides around £43 million every year of Bus Subsidy Operators Grant (BSOG) directly to English local authorities to support local bus services. The government recognises the importance of these services and to improve current bus services, or restore lost services where needed, the government will provide an additional £30 million of funding.

The Bus Services Act 2017 provides the tools local authorities need, such as Franchising and Enhanced Partnerships to improve local bus services and increase passenger numbers. We are working with interested local authorities to determine which of the powers provided are best able to support bus networks in their areas.

■ Bus Services: Worsley and Eccles South

Barbara Keeley:

[\[1705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of bus provision in Worsley and Eccles South.

George Freeman:

The bus market outside London is deregulated and decisions regarding service provision is primarily a commercial matter for bus operators. Decisions on subsidised bus services are a matter for individual English local authorities, in the light of their other spending priorities.

The Bus Services Act 2017 provides the tools local authorities need, such as Franchising and Enhanced Partnerships to improve local bus services and increase passenger numbers. We are working with interested local authorities to determine which of the powers provided are best able to support bus networks in their areas.

We are committed to implementing the UK's first-ever long-term bus strategy, accompanied by a long-term funding settlement. The strategy will focus on the needs of passengers so that more people want to use the bus and set out how national and local government and the private sector will come together to achieve this.

■ Driving: Licensing

Darren Jones:

[\[446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he will make an assessment of the merits of the requirement provided for in the Third European Driving Licence Directive for a minimum horizontal visual field of 120 degrees for Group 1 licence eligibility after the UK leaves the EU.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As part of our preparations future relationship negotiations with the EU, we will be considering all aspects of applicable EU law. However, we would want to ensure that our high safety standards are maintained on UK roads while considering opportunities that may arise from the UK's exit from the EU.

■ High Speed 2 Independent Review

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[1714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Oakervee Review into High Speed Two will be published in full.

Paul Maynard:

The Government has made clear its intentions to publish the report of the Oakervee review and the Transport Secretary has met Doug Oakervee to discuss the review. The Government will set out the next steps for High Speed 2 in due course.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Jonathan Edwards: [\[1716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on productivity of reallocating funding from High Speed Two into Travel to Work area transport routes.

Paul Maynard:

The Government commissioned Doug Oakervee to provide advice on how and whether to proceed with HS2. The Government will set out the next steps for High Speed 2 in due course including its consideration of alternatives.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Costs

Jonathan Edwards: [\[1715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish his response to the Berkeley minority report into High Speed Two.

Paul Maynard:

The Government commissioned Doug Oakervee to provide advice on how and whether to proceed with HS2 and his report will inform our decisions. We will of course give consideration to Lord Berkeley's personal views. The Government will set out the next steps for High Speed 2 in due course.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[1717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the benefit-cost ratio from High Speed Two.

Paul Maynard:

Subject to decisions about whether and how to proceed with HS2, the Government will make public a Full Business Case for HS2 Phase 1 including the underlying economic modelling for the benefit-cost ratio.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Rolling Stock

Jonathan Edwards: [\[1718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the evidential basis is of his Department's analysis that there will be a demand for 18 trains per hour on the High Speed Two line.

Paul Maynard:

The demand modelling for HS2 is set out in the Economic Case. The Government commissioned Doug Oakervee to provide advice on how and whether to proceed with HS2; the Government will set out the next steps for High Speed 2 in due course.

■ Motor Vehicles: Breathalysers**Martyn Day:** [\[425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to align with EU policy requiring Alcolock built-in breathalysers to be fitted in all new motor cars from 2022; and if he will make a statement.

George Freeman:

The EU General Safety Regulation mandates the fitment of “alcohol interlock installation facilitation” or the “interface” in new cars from 2022 and does not mandate the fixture of any specific device.

The Road Safety Statement 2019 included an action to commission research into the effectiveness of alcolocks to understand the feasibility of introducing them in the UK.

As part of our preparations for negotiations with the EU over our future relationship, we will be considering all aspects of applicable EU law. We will ensure that our high safety standards are maintained on UK roads, while considering opportunities that may arise from the UK’s exit from the EU.

■ Passenger Ships: Standards**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the criteria are for exemptions of passenger boats from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency’s damage stability requirements for category C waters.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

Requests from exemptions against safety standards are considered on a case by case basis. Under proposed legislation for older passenger vessels, no new damage stability requirements are expected to be applied to older domestic passenger vessels which operate exclusively on non-tidal Category C Waters.

On tidal Category C waters, owners will be able to apply for exemptions against any new damage stability requirements if they can produce a risk assessment which demonstrates that their area of operation is one of low operational risk. These will also be considered on a case by case basis.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of whether all stages of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency’s 2018 consultation on the Review of standards for older passenger ships were conducted in accordance with his Department’s guidance on consultation principles; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

In accordance with the Cabinet Office guidance on consultation principles, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) conducted two public consultations on the implementation of the review of standards for older passenger ships from 6 November 2018 to 29 January 2019 and 29 May 2019 to 10 July 2019, and received

75 and 52 responses respectively. The consultations were published on gov.uk and notified extensively to stakeholders.

In addition, the MCA engaged widely with stakeholders through the Domestic Passenger Ship Steering Group, and held five workshops with industry on the proposals, three during 2016, another in 2018 and a further one in 2019.

■ River Thames: Boats

Ruth Cadbury: [\[402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, (a) how many movements and (b) what proportion of barge traffic on the tidal Thames between Richmond and Tower Bridges was connected to the (i) Northern Line extension at Battersea and (ii) Thames Tideway Tunnel in each of the last 12 months; and what the projected changes in those numbers and percentages are after completion of those projects.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Port of London Authority (PLA) is the navigation authority for the tidal Thames. The Department for Transport therefore does not hold data on vessel movements on the Thames or intermodal connections.

Ruth Cadbury: [\[403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of vessel (a) speed and (b) frequency on the tidal River Thames on public safety; and what plans he has for (i) a new navigation system and (ii) regulation and monitoring of vessel speed on that river.

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

The Port of London Authority (PLA) is the navigation authority for the tidal Thames. Vessel speed and frequency do not fall under the remit of the Department for Transport therefore no such assessments have been made.

■ River Thames: Passenger Ships

Ruth Cadbury: [\[407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a heritage river route for River Thames passenger boat operations which connect Westminster with Kew Gardens, Richmond, Kingston and Hampton Court Palace.

George Freeman:

Transport in London is devolved and the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London. Decisions relating to River Thames operations and transport services are for the Mayor to take. The Department is always keen to see proposals for improved use of the Thames for passengers and freight traffic.

■ Roads: Construction

Layla Moran: [\[1789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 217, when his Department will be able provide an update on whether the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway will go ahead.

George Freeman:

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 7 January 2020 to Question UIN 217.

■ Skipton-Colne Railway Line

Sara Britcliffe: [\[492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of re-opening the rail link between Skipton and Colne.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We expect to receive the outputs of the further feasibility work soon, to complement the initial Strategic Outline Business Case completed in December 2018. These will inform the Government's decision as to whether a reinstatement scheme should progress to the 'develop' stage of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

This is part of our new approach to rail enhancements to ensure we address the needs of passengers and freight, and that funding commitments appropriately reflect the stage of development of schemes.

■ Southend Airport: Pollution

Sir David Amess: [\[1658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent representations he has received on (a) noise pollution and (b) emissions from aircraft at Southend Airport.

Sir David Amess: [\[1659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent representations he has received on (a) noise pollution and (b) emissions from aircraft at Southend Airport exceeding legal limits.

Paul Maynard:

Since the Secretary of State was appointed in July last year, the Department has received one representation related to noise pollution or emissions from aircraft at Southend Airport. This included the topics of night flights and air quality at Southend Airport and came from my Honourable friend himself.

Sir David Amess: [\[1660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of restrictions on aircraft (a) noise and (b) emissions at Southend Airport.

Paul Maynard:

The management of aircraft noise and emissions at Southend Airport and restrictions to ensure compliance with any limits is the responsibility of the airport and the relevant planning authorities. It is not appropriate for the Government to intervene in this process.

TREASURY■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties**

Tracey Crouch: [\[976\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the timeframe is for the commencement of the review into alcohol duties.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Further announcements about the review into alcohol duties will be made in due course.

■ **Border Delivery Group: Northern Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[1698\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Border Delivery Group has met in Northern Ireland since 13 December 2019.

Jesse Norman:

The Border Delivery Group (BDG) has not met any parties face to face within Northern Ireland during the dates specified. BDG has engaged in London with Northern Ireland Government departments (Border Force NI, DAERA, NIO and FSA NI) during this period.

■ **Cash Dispensing**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[1696\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking with the Payment Systems Regulator to assess the scale of the reduction in the number of free to use ATM's, particularly in rural areas in the last two years.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that widespread free access to cash remains extremely important to the day-to-day lives of many consumers and businesses in the UK.

LINK, the scheme that runs the UK's ATM network, has put in place a Financial Inclusion Programme that includes premium fees for ATM deployers to protect remote free-to-use ATMs one kilometre or further from the next nearest free-to-use ATM or Post Office counter. LINK recently announced that £5 million would also be made available to fund requests for new ATMs from local areas with poor access to cash.

Furthermore, UK Finance – the trade association for the UK banking and financial services sector – has launched a Community Access to Cash Initiative, offering grants to local communities to improve cash access where an ATM is not appropriate or required.

The Payment Systems Regulator is closely monitoring developments in the ATM market and has used its powers to hold LINK to account over commitments to preserve the broad geographic spread of ATMs.

The Government continues to engage with the Payments Systems Regulator via the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group, along with the Financial Conduct Authority and the Bank of England, to ensure comprehensive oversight of the overall cash infrastructure.

■ Divorce: Civil Proceedings

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[970\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the transparency, clarity and regulation of litigation loans for divorces to ensure that customers are fully aware of the implications of those loans before taking them out.

John Glen:

On 1 April 2014, the Government fundamentally reformed regulation of the consumer credit market, transferring regulatory responsibility to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

Like other types of credit, litigation funding in the form of credit is regulated by the FCA and therefore its Consumer Credit Sourcebook applies to these products.

The FCA is looking at whether consumer harm needs to be mitigated in this sector and continues to monitor new firms providing credit to fund legal fees.

■ Employment: Taxation

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[1678\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what improvements have been made to the HMRC Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) tool to ensure that it meets the needs of the private sector; and what proportion of the resulting checks will be full and accurate.

Jesse Norman:

The Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) digital service was first released in March 2017. It helps customers apply the off-payroll working rules correctly.

Following feedback from customers and stakeholders, HMRC released an enhanced version of the service on 25 November 2019. HMRC worked with over 300 stakeholders to identify and test the enhancements to ensure the service meets customer needs. These enhancements include making the questions and the results clearer, increasing the number of questions to provide a more thorough assessment and building in features to reduce user errors.

Improvements have also been made to language and presentation, and HMRC have added guidance to ensure questions are clearly understood. CEST is accurate. It has been tested rigorously against known case law and settled cases. HMRC stand by its results if it is used in accordance with HMRC guidance and the facts put into CEST are correct.

CEST currently provides an employment status determination for tax purposes in around 85% of uses, all bar the most complex or finely balanced cases. For these more complex cases, HMRC provide detailed guidance and dedicated support.

■ **Football Pools: Excise Duties**

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

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of reducing Pool Betting Duty to 10 per cent on the industry and economy of the north of England.

Philip Davies: [\[954\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing Pool Betting Duty to 10 per cent.

Mr Simon Clarke:

No recent estimate has been made. The Government recognises the popularity of the Football Pools. But reducing Pool Betting Duty is likely to have a negligible effect and could put revenue at risk, particularly through incentivising switching of products from fixed odds bets to pooled bets. HM Treasury however keeps all taxes under active review.

■ **Mayflower: Anniversaries**

Luke Pollard: [\[467\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will change the status of the Mayflower 400 commemorative coin from collectors-only to general circulation.

John Glen:

The Royal Mint has a long-established tradition of producing coins in order to mark historic moments. The 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage is an important moment in our shared history with the United States and will rightly be celebrated with the production of a commemorative coin. The number and denomination of coins issued into circulation is dependent on demand from UK banks and Post Offices.

■ **Money Laundering**

Deidre Brock: [\[408\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on preventing banks in the UK being used as depositories in the laundering of state funds from other nations.

John Glen:

HM Treasury is responsible for the Money Laundering Regulations 2017 ('the Regulations'). The Regulations set out the high-level requirements on regulated firms to combat money laundering and ensure that key professionals identify their customers and understand the purpose behind transactions, including the source of funds. The Regulations are designed to combat illicit finance, while minimising the burden on legitimate customers.

The Regulations require firms in scope of the regulations to have in place appropriate risk-management systems and procedures to determine whether a customer (or their beneficial owner) is a Politically Exposed Person (PEP), family member of a PEP or close associate of a PEP.

PEPs are individuals entrusted with a prominent public function. This definition includes but is not limited to heads of state, heads of government, ministers and deputy or assistant ministers, members of parliament or of similar legislative bodies.

PEPs can pose a high money laundering risk because they may be able to abuse their position for private gain. Not all PEPs, however, pose the same money laundering risk; there is a hierarchy depending on country of origin and rank, from middle tier officials to individuals with significant or absolute control over the levers, patronage and resources in a given area. For example, the Financial Conduct Authority's guidance states that UK PEPs should be considered as lower risk.

Where a firm has identified that a customer (or their beneficial owner) is a PEP, family member or close associate of a PEP, it must conduct an appropriate range of Enhanced Due Diligence (EDD) measures. When carrying out EDD on PEPs, firms must take adequate measures to establish the source of wealth and source of funds which are involved in the proposed transaction or business relationship, get approval from senior management to establish or continue a relationship with that person and carry out enhanced monitoring of the business relationship.

■ Mortgages: EU Law**Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:****[1063]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the mortgage rules related to the EU Mortgage Credit Directive once the UK leaves the EU.

John Glen:

After the UK leaves the EU – which the Government is determined to do - we will have control over the rules that we set for our financial services sector. The UK is committed to uphold global, open markets underpinned by the highest standards of regulation and appropriate levels of supervisory oversight.

Common rules will remain in place until the end of the Implementation Period on 31 December 2020. Any EU measures which become operative during that implementation period would therefore also apply in the UK.

The Mortgage Credit Directive (MCD) was introduced by the European Commission following the financial crisis to improve standards for mortgage lending across the EU. The final text of the MCD was published in February 2014, with a requirement for Member States to transpose it into national law by 21 March 2016.

The MCD aims to ensure a high level of consumer protection for mortgage applicants. The majority of its rules already aligned with the existing UK regulatory system for mortgages. For the most part, the Government therefore implemented the requirements through alteration to the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) rules. The FCA monitors the impact of its rules on the market closely. For example, their Mortgages Market Study of March 2019 found that broadly the mortgage market is working well for consumers.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Northern Ireland**

Jim McMahon:

[\[443\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of vehicle checks that will be required daily from (a) Great Britain to Northern Ireland and (b) Northern Ireland to Great Britain after the UK leaves the EU.

Jesse Norman:

No such estimate is available. The deal agreed with the EU will enable the Government to ensure that no tariffs are payable for goods moving from Northern Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom and that there is no hard border on the island of Ireland. The deal also ensures that unfettered access for goods moving from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK can be maintained.

■ **Premium Bonds**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[1677\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to make it the policy of National Savings & Investments to enable Premium Bond prize winners to have their prizes credited to their bank accounts by BACS irrespective of whether they have an email address as well as a postal address; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

National Savings & Investments ('NS&I') is required by regulations to notify its customers of their Premium Bond prizes. This ensures that customers are updated on their savings and are reassured around the security of their investments.

NS&I notify its customers of their Premium Bond prizes by email, text message or post. Customers can also check whether they have won on the NS&I website, prize checker app or Alexa Skill. NS&I customers have the choice to receive their prizes either directly via BACS payments or by post. Since November 2019, NS&I also offers BACS payments of prizes to customers who have registered their UK mobile phone number with its online and phone service.

Additional support is offered to certain groups, including older and disabled people with additional needs. Under this process, such customers can opt to receive their Premium Bond prizes through BACS without needing an e-mail address.

■ UK Relations With EU

Lisa Nandy: [\[992\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether regional impact assessments will be published for (a) the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, (b) the Political Declaration and (c) the UK's mandate for the next phase of negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU.

John Glen:

The election result has shown that the British people want to get Brexit done, and they have given the government a strong and clear mandate to that end.

The government published an Impact Assessment in support of the WAB in October. It is a standard assessment of the direct costs and benefits to businesses of the elements of the Bill and remains valid for the current WAB.

The specifics of our future relationship with the EU will be the subject of the next phase of negotiations. We will keep Parliament updated throughout those discussions and provide analysis at appropriate points.

The Chancellor has stated that the upcoming Budget will set out ambitious plans to unleash Britain's potential, level up across the UK and usher in a decade of renewal.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carers Allowance

Neil Gray: [\[1757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have been prosecuted for Carer's Allowance (a) overpayments and (b) wrongful payment in the last 10 years.

Will Quince:

To provide this information would incur a disproportionate cost to the Department.

The Department would only seek to prosecute an individual where there was strong evidence to suggest that the individual had committed benefit fraud.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Disclosure of Information

Neil Gray: [\[1758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish her Department's policy on whistleblowing.

Mims Davies:

DWP supports the right of employees to raise any concerns they have about alleged wrongdoing and to be able to do this confidentially, if they wish, without fear of retribution. Within DWP, we encourage this and a Whistleblowing Policy is already published on the Department's Intranet and is accessible by all employees. A copy of this policy will be placed in the Library of the House.

Independent Case Examiner**Rushanara Ali:**[\[1732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints regarding quality of service were received by the Independent Case Examiner in 2018-19; and how many of those complaints related to delays in commencing or completing an investigation.

Mims Davies:

During the 2018/19 reporting year the Independent Case Examiner's Office received 418 complaints about the service it provided; of which 289 concerned delays in commencing or completing an investigation (of those 164 took the form of a standard letter, from those complaining about communications associated with changes to women's State Pension age).

Rushanara Ali:[\[1733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons the Independent Case Examiner's Annual Report for 2018-19 only includes data on the number of weeks taken for a full investigation to be completed from the date of commencement and not from the date on which the complaint was made.

Mims Davies:

The Independent Case Examiner (ICE) is an Office Holder, appointed under contract to review complaints about DWP and its contracted service providers. In addition to adjudicating on escalated complaints and making case specific findings and recommendations for redress, the ICE looks to identify wider systemic issues associated with service failures: one of their contractual requirements is to report annually on their work to the Permanent Secretary. DWP provides an Office to support the ICE discharge their contractual obligations, but they have no role in the management of that Office or its resources. Their Annual Report therefore has its focus on findings associated with case examinations and outcomes, rather than the wider administration of the ICE Office.

Rushanara Ali:[\[1734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time taken was by the Independent Case Examiner to (a) begin and (b) complete an investigation into a complaint against her Department in the first six months of 2019.

Mims Davies:

In the first six months of 2019 (January to June 2019) it took the Independent Case Examiner's Office an average of: 59 weeks to commence an investigation (from the point at which the complaint was accepted for examination); and 23 weeks to complete an investigation (from the point at which it was allocated to an investigation case manager).

■ **Social Security Benefits**

Rachael Maskell:**[1078]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) people and (b) women in work are claiming (i) universal credit and (ii) legacy benefits.

Will Quince:

The information requested for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit is published and available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The numbers of in work families receiving tax credits is published by HMRC at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2017-to-2018>

The information requested on Jobseeker's Allowance is not readily available and to provide it would incur a disproportionate cost.

The information available for the number of employed individuals that are in receipt of Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance in Great Britain can be found in the following table:

Number of working people that are in receipt of Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance as of May 2019 in Great Britain

	INCOME SUPPORT	EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE
Total number of people	9,100	102,029
Women only	7,800	58,318

Source: DWP 5% Sample data and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Set (WPLS)

Notes:

1. Figures for Income Support are rounded to the nearest 100. Figures for Employment and Support Allowance have had disclosure control applied to them. Statistical disclosure control has been applied to the Employment and Support

Allowance figures to avoid the release of confidential data. Totals may not sum due to the disclosure control applied.

1. For the Income Support we have used the 5% WPLS data. The best statistics on benefits are derived from 100% data sources. However, the 5% sample data still provide some detail not yet available from the 100% data sources. DWP recommends that, where the detail is only available on the 5% sample data, the proportions derived should be applied to the overall 100% total for the benefit. This is the methodology used to derive the Income Support figures provided here.

Neil Gray:

[\[1759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department enforces the (a) repayment of social security overpayments and (b) prosecutions when the error was made by her Department.

Will Quince:

For all benefits other than Universal Credit, New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and New Style Employment Support Allowance (ESA), overpayments resulting from Departmental error are not recoverable.

Section 105 of The Welfare Reform Act 2012 amended the Social Security Act 1992, so that for Universal Credit, New Style JSA and New Style ESA, any payment in excess of the entitlement is recoverable, regardless of how the overpayment of entitlement occurred. This policy was brought in to reflect the need for a better value for money welfare system and to reinforce the overarching aim that Universal Credit mirrors work.

As a Department, we understand the impact that debt can have on the wellbeing of claimants and we endeavour to ensure that the recovery of any overpayment is managed in a way that takes account of the claimant's individual circumstances.

I can confirm that the Department would not prosecute a claimant if an overpayment occurred purely as a result of a Departmental error, and would only consider prosecuting a claimant where there is strong evidence to suggest they may have committed benefit fraud

■ Social Security Benefits: Glasgow South West

Chris Stephens:

[\[1097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many advance benefit payments have been made to claimants in Glasgow South West constituency in each month since January 2019.

Will Quince:

New Universal Credit claimants who require urgent financial support, can apply for new claim advances to provide access to a payment quickly, until the first regular payment is due. Additionally, existing Universal Credit claimants who have told the Department about a change in their circumstances, which means more Universal Credit is owed, may also apply for an advance payment. Budgeting Advances exist to

help pay for emergency household costs, for example, buying a new cooker or for help getting a job or staying in work.

There are a range of advance payments that Universal Credit claimants can access. Information surrounding eligibility conditions and how to apply is published online at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-advances#how-to-apply-for-a-universal-credit-advance>

The entirety of the number of advances paid, in Glasgow South West parliamentary constituency since January 2019, is provided in the table below.

MONTH	UNIVERSAL CREDIT ADVANCES PAID
January 2019	420
February 2019	590
March 2019	520
April 2019	510
May 2019	450
June 2019	550
July 2019	510
August 2019	510

Notes

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10
2. Figures go up to August 2019 in line with published statistics relating to households on Universal Credit
3. Figures include all types of advances
4. Figures relate to Universal Credit full service only

■ Social Security Benefits: Wales

Stephen Doughty:

[\[1436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints her Department received in relation to processing claims for (a) universal credit and (b) personal independence payments in Wales in the last six months.

Mims Davies:

The customer's address is not a mandatory field when registering complaints on the Department's complaints system. From the available data, the Department has received a total of 13 Universal Credit and 22 Personal Independence Payment

complaints in relation to processing claims for Wales during the period July to December 2019.

■ Thomas Cook: Insolvency

Mike Amesbury: [\[1038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports that former Thomas Cook staff are having difficulties accessing and navigating the benefits system.

Mims Davies:

The Department is offering a range of support to anyone affected by the closure of Thomas Cook, through our Rapid Response Service (RRS) and wider services. This is designed to give practical support and advice to employers and their employees when faced with redundancy.

The RRS is delivered in partnership with a range of national and local partners, including National Careers Service and local service providers. It was mobilised for former Thomas Cook employees to help people find a new job as soon as possible by offering tailored and individual support. Each Jobcentre Plus district area deploys resources according to the local situation and the needs of their claimants.

In addition, Citizens Advice (England and Wales) and Citizens Advice Scotland continue to deliver 'Help to Claim' support to claimants making a new Universal Credit claim. Help to Claim have offered locally tailored support to former Thomas Cook employees in need of assistance face to face, and through prioritised telephony and web-chat channels.

The Department keeps information we provide surrounding redundancies under review. This includes how we explain RRS and entitlements to benefits such as New Style Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit. We are committed to having the right level of resource in place to support and direct people to the correct benefit type.

■ Universal Credit

Stephen Timms: [\[1665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of job centres operate a universal credit full digital service.

Will Quince:

Rollout of the Universal Credit Full Service was completed on 12 December 2018 and is available in every Jobcentre Plus.

Universal Credit is a 24 hour, seven days a week, digital service that allows every claimant to manage their own data and account online at a time which is convenient for them. Claimants can check their Universal Credit benefit payments through their account, notify us of changes and record notes on the online journal facility.

Universal Credit has been designed to be as quick and easy as possible for the user, ensuring that claimants receive money at the earliest opportunity. It is designed to be

a 'digital-first' service, ensuring we make best use of technology to deliver a modern and effective working-age welfare system.

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

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

All Jobcentre Plus offices across the country have Wi-Fi and computers available for claimants to access the internet. For those that are still unable to access or use digital services, or are not able to travel, assistance to make and maintain their claim is available via the Freephone Universal Credit helpline – which is clearly displayed on GOV.UK.

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 to help people make a Universal Credit claim up to receiving their first full correct payment on time, and is available online, on the phone and face-to-face through local Citizen's Advice services.

Although the Department offers comprehensive support for claimants to use our digital service, there will be occasions when people are unable to make their claim online, so telephone applications can be accepted. In these instances, information normally available through a claimant's online account will be communicated in an alternative format, which is best suited to an individual's circumstances.

Stephen Timms: [1666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of universal credit applicants manage their claims primarily (a) online, (b) via telephone, (c) face-to-face, (d) in other ways; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

To provide this information would incur a disproportionate cost to the Department.

Universal Credit is designed to be a 'digital-first' service, ensuring we make best use of technology to deliver a modern and effective working-age welfare system, allowing our staff to concentrate on those people who require additional support.

Stephen Timms: [1667]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of Universal Support in helping people who are not digitally literate to make an online claim for universal credit; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The Department offers comprehensive support for claimants to use our digital service, but we recognise there will be occasions when people are unable to make and/or maintain their Universal Credit claim online, and so telephone and face to face

support is available. In these instances, information normally available through a claimant's online account, will be communicated in an alternative format which is best suited to an individual's circumstances. The Help to Claim service, which replaced the previous "Universal Support" service was introduced on 1 April 2019 and is delivered by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland.

Help to Claim offers tailored, practical support to help people make their claim to Universal Credit and can work with claimants up to receiving their first full correct payment on time. It is available online, through a Freephone telephone number and face to face channels.

The Department is committed to ensuring that delivery of support services, such as Help to Claim, is carefully monitored and evaluated to provide effective support to our most vulnerable claimants, whilst ensuring value to taxpayers.

■ Universal Credit: Telephone Services

Stephen Timms: [\[1663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she will make it her policy that all universal credit claimants making phone calls to her Department should be informed that staff can phone them back free of charge.

Will Quince:

The Department takes seriously the need to support claimants, and wants Universal Credit to be easy to access. It is designed to be a 'digital-first' service, ensuring we make best use of technology to deliver a modern and effective working-age welfare system. This allows our staff to concentrate on those people who require additional support through different channels.

Since 29 November 2017 all Universal Credit telephone lines are Freephone '0800' numbers. Once connected to this service, a virtual telephone network will route the call to the most appropriate agent available with required skills to support the caller. Should a claimant call a previous chargeable Universal Credit telephone number, they will be redirected to our current numbers and the call will terminate.

Stephen Timms: [\[1664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of universal credit claimants who have been offered a free of charge call back by her Department have accepted that offer in the latest period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **ENABLE Funding Scheme**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility (Kelly Tolhurst):

[\[HCWS35\]](#)

'ENABLE Funding' is a scheme administered by the British Business Bank which provides senior funding (effectively at commercial terms) to delivery partners and is designed to increase funding diversification for leasing and asset finance providers and peer-to-peer lenders, with the overall purpose of increasing the supply of debt to underlying small and medium-sized enterprises.

Since the scheme began in 2014, senior secured funding has been provided to various delivery partners and their receivable portfolios have been 'warehoused' in a special purpose entity. The aggregate sum of certain receivable portfolios reached a desired critical mass whereby a capital markets refinancing (or securitisation) can proceed, repaying the funding. The transaction is expected to complete before the end of the financial year 2019/20.

As part of the transaction, a credit enhancement in the form of a capped second loss guarantee will be agreed. The guarantee issued by the Department is capped at up to £30m and the 'second loss' element means that the participating delivery partners will fund and suffer an agreed amount up to the first loss threshold should defaults in the portfolio occur.

The guarantee is not expected to last for more than seven years and in practice will likely be much shorter. The beneficiary is the securitisation vehicle (a newly incorporated entity) which will purchase the facilities as part of the transaction. The Department will receive a commercial fee in return for the guarantee.

As a matter of record, I will be laying a Departmental Minute today explaining the procedure followed and containing a description of the liability undertaken.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ **Indemnity for Special Representative on UK Victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism**

Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dr Andrew Murrison):

[\[HCWS32\]](#)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 4 October formally commenced the appointment of Mr William Shawcross as his Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. This appointment reflects HMG's strong commitment to support all UK victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism. The Special Representative has been asked to focus, in the first instance, on investigating the

feasibility of calculating a precise number of people affected and the compensation due to them from the Libyan Government. This is an important preliminary step. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) believes that, provided the Special Representative acts honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence in the performance of his obligations under the terms and conditions agreed with him, he should be indemnified against any liability arising from this role. The FCO notified Parliament of its intention to undertake this contingent liability on 15 October 2019. As Parliament dissolved before the 14 sitting days required for its consideration expired, the Departmental Minute is being re-laid today in the House of Commons. Further details are set out therein.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Health Update

Secretary of State for Health (Matt Hancock):

[\[HCWS30\]](#)

As set out clearly in our Manifesto, the NHS is this Government's number one domestic priority. We are supporting the NHS through our historic funding settlement, which will see the NHS budget increase by £33.9bn within the next five years. This will soon be enshrined into law.

I recently set out my priorities for the system^[1]. This statement highlights the work that has already begun to deliver on these priorities, including our major manifesto commitments of:

- 50,000 more nurses;
- 40 new hospitals over the next decade;
- Ending unfair hospital car parking charges
- and 50 million more GP appointments.

Infrastructure

Work has already begun to deliver our manifesto commitment on free hospital parking for those who need it. This government recently announced that from April 2020, disabled people, frequent outpatient attenders, parents of sick children staying overnight, and staff working night shifts will be able to access free hospital car parking. This change will benefit thousands of NHS patients and visitors in England and mean that across the country we have a consistent approach whereby those with the greatest need will no longer have to pay for parking. We will also consider car parking capacity across the country, and how improved technology will reduce burdens for hospitals, and take away stress for visitors.

Prevention

Community pharmacies play a crucial role in helping people stay healthy and prevent pressure on hospitals. In October 2019, as part of our 'pharmacy first approach', the community pharmacist consultation service was introduced. This means people with minor illnesses or who need medicine urgently have been referred to local pharmacies.

More than 100,000 patients have had appointments with expert pharmacists in the last 10 weeks, relieving pressure on GPs and A&E departments.

People

As we begin 2020, the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, we are embarking on the biggest nursing recruitment drive in decades, backed by a new universal support package. Nursing students on courses from September 2020 will now benefit from guaranteed, additional support of at least £5,000 a year to help with living costs, some students could be eligible for up to £8,000 per year. It is expected to benefit more than 35,000 students every year. The funding will not have to be repaid by recipients.

The New Years Honours list for 2020 celebrated the incredible work taking place in the health and social care sector all around the UK. This included senior leaders Professor Dame Sally Davies (Chief Medical Officer between 2011 and 2019), Simon Stevens (NHS Chief Executive) and Lyn Romeo (Chief Social Worker).

Technology

We will use frontline technology to improve patients' experience, provide flexible working for clinicians, and help save lives.

This government has announced that it will provide £40 million to reduce NHS staff login times, tackling one of the main technology frustrations facing NHS staff. Currently, many NHS staff have to log in to multiple computer programmes when tending to a patient, with each programme requiring its own login details. Some staff may need to log in to as many as 15 different systems. This outdated technology slows down and frustrates staff and prevents them from giving patients their full attention and the care they deserve. Harnessing the best technology will improve care for patients and improve the burden on our staff.

To further improve the digital capability of NHS trusts, we will set up a new 'digital aspirant' programme. This will provide funding over several years to assist with digital transformation projects so that trusts can provide safe, high-quality and efficient care.

Additionally, this government has announced that a further £4.5 million will be given to local authorities to develop digital adult social care projects to support the most vulnerable in society to live independently for longer and improve information sharing across the NHS and social care.

[1] <https://policyexchange.org.uk/pxevents/keynote-speech-by-the-rt-hon-matt-hancock-mp/>

■ **Ministerial Correction: PQ293466 and PQ293468**

Minister of State for Health (Edward Argar):

[HCWS31]

I would like to inform the House that a written answer I gave on 8 October 2019, to the former hon. Member for Blackpool South contained an error and wish to correct the formal record.

In my reply, I was incorrectly advised and stated that “The Chair at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the Chair at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust sought the views of NHS England and NHS Improvement on the possibility of merging services and provision between the two Trusts.”

The correct position is that The Chair at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS FT did seek advice from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI), as to whether they would support a proposal for a joint Chief Executive Officer, working across both organisations. These conversations did not involve discussion around merging services or provision.

Both trusts provided NHSEI with a number of assurances that having a joint Chief Executive working across two organisations would bring actual benefits and improve the care of patient populations in Blackpool and East Lancashire. NHSEI confirmed that they would be happy with those arrangements pending the appropriate approvals from within their own organisations. On 1 May Kevin McGee was appointed as interim Chief Executive of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, whilst remaining as Chief Executive and Accountable Officer of East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. On 4 October 2019 this joint appointment was made permanent.

Powers under Section 56A and 56AA of the NHS Act 2006 enables an NHS Foundation Trust (FT) to merge with another FT or NHS Trust. The Trusts are required to make a joint application to NHS Improvement for any merger to go ahead. Where a merger involves an NHS Trust, this must also be supported by the Secretary of State. Any decisions by the two trusts need to reflect the views of local stakeholders, including local Members of Parliament.

HOME OFFICE

■ Code of Practice for Armed Policing and Police Use of Less Lethal Weapons

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS34\]](#)

As Secretary of State for the Home Department, I have today given approval for the College of Policing to issue the Code of Practice for Armed Policing and Police Use of Less Lethal Weapons.

The Code of Practice describes the roles and responsibilities of Chief Officers in relation to armed policing and less lethal weapons. It is relevant to all police officers in England and Wales involved in armed policing or the use of less lethal weapons setting out as it does the basic principles of the selection, evaluation, approval, authorisation, acquisition, training and deployment of these weapons by the police.

The Code replaces the 2003 Code of Practice for the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons. The Code has a statutory basis in law, meaning that all police officers have a duty to have regard to it. The revised Code of Practice should be used in conjunction with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for Armed Policing. Alongside the APP the Code of Practice will help to ensure that the police force maintains the high standards for the police use of firearms, specialist munitions and less lethal weapons, for which the UK is renown.

The new Code also addresses the recommendation made to the Home Office by the Anthony Grainger Public Inquiry. The Inquiry, which was established following the shooting of Anthony Grainger by the police in March 2012, concerns the authorisation of new weapon systems. It stated, ‘*The Secretary for State of the Home Department should ensure that the new Code of Practice on Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons contains an express prohibition on the use of a new weapon system by the police service until the approval process set out in the Code of Practice has been completed and the new systems has been approved by the Secretary of State*’.

The Government accepts this recommendation. The revised Code makes clear that all new less lethal weapons and specialist munitions for use by police forces in England and Wales, and all significant changes to these weapons, must be approved by the Home Secretary.

In relation to the other recommendations, addressed to the police and others, it is the Government’s intention to provide a formal response in due course, once we have fully considered the report, and any recommendations therein. My officials have asked the National Police Chiefs’ Council and Greater Manchester Police to set out how they will respond to the concerns raised by the Inquiry and improve the safety of armed policing operations.

Finally, I would like to thank our police officers for the invaluable role they play in keeping the country safe, and the College of Policing for the work it has done on the Code of Practice. The Code of Practice has been laid before Parliament today and copies will be available from the Vote Office. It will also be available to view on the College of Policing website <https://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx> and on Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-policing-and-police-use-of-less-lethal-weapons-code-of-practice>

TREASURY

■ Launch date of the upcoming Government and UKSA consultation on the Retail Prices Index

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sajid Javid): [\[HCWS33\]](#)

Yesterday, I wrote to the Chair of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee to inform him that the joint consultation between the Government and UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) on a proposed change to address the shortcomings in the Retail Price Index (RPI) will now launch at Budget 2020. The consultation had been scheduled to launch this month. However, following the general election and my confirmation of the Budget date, I have agreed with UKSA that the consultation will now launch at Budget.

The consultation will launch at the Budget on 11 March. It will be open for responses for a period of six weeks, closing on 22 April. The Government and UKSA will respond to the consultation before the Parliamentary summer recess.