



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 4 March 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 04 March 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

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ **Climate Change Convention**

**Deidre Brock:**

[\[20510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the UK and China have made in bilateral discussions on the UNFCCC COP26; and what steps he is taking to encourage other countries to improve their ambitions at that COP.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Prime Minister spoke to President Xi of China on the 18th Feb and agreed to work closely together on the issue of climate change ahead of COP26 in Glasgow and the Convention on Biological Diversity Summit in China.

As part of our incoming COP Presidency, in partnership with Italy, we are encouraging all countries to submit increased Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long term net zero strategies ahead of COP26 which represent their highest possible ambition. The UK will play its part and come forward with an enhanced NDC well ahead of COP26 in November.

#### ■ **Counterfeit Manufacturing**

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[21880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to tackle the effect of counterfeit goods on UK businesses.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The UK Government takes the issue of Intellectual Property (IP) infringement seriously and is working with industry and enforcement agencies on a number of initiatives to tackle this issue. This includes the Intellectual Property Office's work with the IP Crime Group to coordinate the UK response to tackling counterfeiting and piracy. The IPO funds and works closely with the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) based in the City of London Police which is dedicated to tackling serious and organised online piracy and counterfeiting to protect legitimate UK businesses.

#### ■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[21235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support an increase in the number of local authorities providing electric charging points in their car parks.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) is a demand-led funding scheme which assists local authorities with the cost of installing chargepoints in

residential streets including in local authority owned car parks. The funding available is for 75% of the capital costs of procuring and installing the chargepoint, and is administered by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). In October 2019, Secretary for State for Transport wrote to all local authorities encouraging them to send their strategies for infrastructure deployment and to take advantage of ORCS funding.

Last month we announced that Government funding will be doubled to £10 million for the installation of chargepoints on residential streets next year. This additional investment could fund up to another 3,600 chargepoints across the country.

### ■ Green Deal Scheme: Misrepresentation

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[20503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many complaints about the mis-selling of Green Deal loans have been received by his Department from consumers resident in (a) Scotland, (b) England and (c) Wales in each year since 2013.

**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[20504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many offers of full loan cancellations his Department has made in response to complaints his Department has received about the mis-selling of Green Deal loans.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The numbers of complaints about the mis-selling of Green Deal loans, referred to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, from consumers resident in (a) Scotland, (b) England and (c) Wales in each year since 2013 are as follows:

|          | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | TOTAL |
|----------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Scotland | 3    | 50   | 98   | 4    | 155   |
| England  | 1    | 15   | 87   | 2    | 105   |
| Wales    | 5    | 3    | 12   | 0    | 20    |
| Total    | 9    | 68   | 197  | 6    | 280   |

Under the Green Deal Framework Regulations, the Secretary of State may reduce or cancel a Green Deal Plan, if he is satisfied that there has been a breach of the law or code of practice.

The Regulations require that, before imposing any sanction, the Secretary of State gives notice to affected parties of his intention to impose a sanction and provides them with an opportunity to make representations before it is made final.

To date, 131 Intention Notices have been issued in respect of complaints about mis-selling of Green Deal loans. Of these, four have proposed cancellation from the effective date of the complaint.

#### ■ **Offshore Wind Programme Board: Public Appointments**

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[21356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the membership is of the Offshore Wind Programme Board.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Offshore Wind Programme Board (OWPB) no longer exists. Following publication of the Offshore Wind Sector Deal in March 2019, the functions previously delivered by the OWPB were incorporated into Offshore Wind Industry Council's Sector Deal delivery programme. An industry programme management office, led by Renewable UK, monitors the sector deal delivery.

Offshore Wind Industry Council membership comprises all developers active in the UK and key supply chain companies, as well as the ORE Catapult and the Devolved Administrations. All appointments are on a voluntary basis and unpaid.

#### ■ **Sirius Minerals**

**Mrs Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[20602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the potential collapse of Sirius Minerals; and what support is available to shareholders in that company.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The offer made by Anglo-American to acquire Sirius Minerals is a commercial matter between the companies and their shareholders; therefore, it would not be appropriate for me to comment.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ **Cybercrime: Northern Ireland**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[22369\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to meet the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss the National Cyber Security Strategy.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Our National Cyber Security Strategy (2016-2021) is delivering transformational change across the United Kingdom, building new capabilities and intervening to address the cyber threat.

Government Departments and the National Cyber Security Centre regularly engage with the Devolved Administrations to understand priorities and work together to

address shared challenges, and will continue to do so as we develop our plans beyond 2021.

## ■ Electoral Register: Digital Technology

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [22431]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has used the powers under section 52(1A) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 to require local authorities to keep electoral registers in a standardised digital format.

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [22432]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require that digital copies of the electoral register be supplied to candidates and political parties in a standardised format consistent across all local authorities.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government has not issued a ministerial direction to require local authorities to keep electoral registers in a standardised digital format. However, the issue of a common standard for electoral register data has been discussed previously at meetings of the Parliamentary Parties Panel.

This Panel is run by the Electoral Commission and gives representatives of the main political parties a forum to discuss issues affecting them. More information can be found at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are/how-we-make-decisions/party-panels>

## ■ Electronic Government: Proof of Identity

**Chi Onwurah:** [20485]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department has taken in response to the conclusions of the National Audit Office report entitled Investigation into Verify published on 5 March 2019, HC 1926.

**Chi Onwurah:** [21255]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding will be allocated to the Verify Government digital identity scheme for the 2020-21 financial year.

**Chi Onwurah:** [21256]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking in response to the withdrawal of identity providers from the Government's Verify scheme in April 2020.

**Chi Onwurah:** [21257]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish the findings of the digital identity consultation, which closed on 15 September 2019.

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[21258\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on UK Government digital identity providers located in EU member states.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

There are no changes to the commercial agreements of levels of service with UK Government digital identity providers as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

The Government's response to the digital identity consultation (Call for Evidence) will be published in due course.

Verify is delivered with private sector providers and next steps will be announced in the usual manner.

An extensive response to the PAC report was published in October 2019 and can be found at [CP 176 – Treasury Minutes Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts](#).

**■ Government Departments: Rural Areas****Alicia Kearns:** [\[20520\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of firms that have been successful in bidding for Government contracts between 2015 and 2020 are (a) headquartered and (b) registered with Companies House at an address in a predominantly rural area as defined by the Office of National Statistics' Rural/urban classification 2011.

**Chloe Smith:**

This information is not held centrally.

Records of central government contracts above £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

**■ List of Ministerial Responsibilities****Karl Turner:** [\[23630\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish an updated list of Ministerial responsibilities.

**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[23666\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his timescale is for publishing an updated list of ministerial responsibilities, including executive agencies and non-ministerial departments.

**Chloe Smith:**

Further to the answer given to PQ [5342](#) on 23 January 2020 and PQ [21909](#) on 3 March, details of executive agencies and non-ministerial departments can be found on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

**■ Radio: Ministers****Chi Onwurah:** [\[21985\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is the Government's policy that ministers do not appear on the Radio 4 Today programme.

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[21986\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government provides guidance to Government ministers on criteria for determining whether to accept invitations for media appearances.

**Chloe Smith:**

This Government is committed to being open in their dealings with the press and to the principles of media freedom.

Ministers from across Government have appeared on and been interviewed by a wide range of media on a daily basis and have spent time speaking directly to the British public in other ways.

**DEFENCE****■ Armed Forces: Suicide****Sir Mark Hendrick:** [\[22362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many serving Armed Forces personnel have committed suicide in the last (a) month, (b) two months, (c) six months, (d) year and (e) two years; and in which service branches those suicides occurred.

**Johnny Mercer:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 February 2020 to Question 1237 to the hon. Member for Newport East (Jessica Morden).

**Attachments:**

1. 1237 - Armed Forces Suicide [Hansard Extract 24 February 2020, UIN 1237.docx]

**■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement****Jack Lopresti:** [\[20461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to accelerate the timescale for the (a) the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme (b) the Challenger 2 Lethality Enhancement Programme; and if he will make a statement.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There are currently no plans to make any changes to the Warrior Capability Sustainment Project or the Challenger 2 Life Extension Project. The Government's Integrated Security Defence and Foreign Policy Review will consider all aspects of our defence and security capabilities including these projects.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department has allocated from the public purse to the Ajax programme in each year from 2012 to 2019.

**Jeremy Quin:**

*[Holding answer 2 March 2020]:* The table below sets out the amount spent on the AJAX programme, rounded to the nearest £100:

| FY2012-13   | FY2013-14   | FY2014-15    | FY2015-16    | FY2016-17    | FY2017-18    | FY2018-19    |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| £92,138,700 | £71,902,200 | £281,655,700 | £274,362,100 | £351,382,300 | £463,278,400 | £600,936,200 |

### ■ Chinook Helicopters

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of the Armed Forces' Chinook helicopters are currently in storage.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There are currently no Chinook Helicopters held in storage.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the consolidated flying hours were for the UK's fleet of Chinook helicopters in 2019.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Flying hours are recorded by Financial Year (FY) rather than calendar year. The total consolidated flying hours for Chinook helicopters in 2018-19 was 10,530.

### ■ Hyde Park Barracks

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether land within Hyde Park Barracks has been sold in the last five years.

**Jeremy Quin:**

No land within Hyde Park Barracks has been sold in the last five years.

### ■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[21172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support package his Department has agreed with Boeing for the P-8 aircraft; and what proportion of the through-life support of those aircraft will take place in the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Commercial work to agree the future support arrangements for the Royal Air Force (RAF) Poseidon fleet is ongoing, and in order to protect the commercial interests of the Ministry of Defence, I cannot provide any further detail at this stage. Currently, support for the two aircraft that have already been delivered is being provided as part of the Foreign Military Sale case. This is enabling us to make use of the arrangements already in place for US Navy aircraft.

**■ Nuclear Submarines: Decommissioning****Luke Pollard:**[\[21291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review will tackle the timeline and delivery of the recycling of the retired nuclear submarines stored at (a) Devonport and (b) Rosyth.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence is fully committed to its part in supporting the successful delivery of the Government's ambition for the Integrated Review.

We remain committed to the disposal of our decommissioned submarines in a safe, secure, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner, as soon as practicably possible.

**■ Type 23 Frigates****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[21174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department maintains access to a supply of replacement gearboxes for the Type 23 Frigate.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Key components of the Type 23 Frigate gearbox, such as bearing, gears and wheels, are stockpiled in case replacements are required.

**■ Type 31 Frigates****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the through-life support costs are of the Type 31 Frigate.

**Jeremy Quin:**

It is too early to say what the through life support costs of the Type 31 Frigate will be.

**■ Type 31 Frigates: Iron and Steel****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to include British steel within the supply chain of the Type 31 Frigate; what proportion of the hull contains British steel; and what the UK content is of the entire ship.

**Jeremy Quin:**

It is too early to say what the steel requirement for the Type 31 Frigates might be. In line with Cabinet Office guidance on the procurement of steel in major projects, the Type 31 prime contractor, Babcock will make its steel requirements known to the UK steel industry in order that they may consider bidding.

**■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the National Shipbuilding Strategy, whether the cost of the Type 31 Frigate remains £250 million.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The average production cost will be £250 million per ship. This is consistent with the challenge laid down for the Type 31 programme in the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18618 on Type 31 Frigates, what the definition of in the water is; and whether that definition includes the ship being affixed with Government Furnished Equipment.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[22375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18618 on Type 31 Frigates, when the in water date is for the remaining Type 31 Frigates.

**Jeremy Quin:**

In the context of Type 31 the phrase 'in the water' means the point at which the ship is transported out of the assembly hall to an adjacent wet basin where it will be lowered into the water or 'floated out'. Government Furnished Equipment will be integrated into the ship at appropriate points, including after 'float out' as is common practice in the building of warships.

The programme remains on track for the first ship to be in the water by 2023, however further information on the 'in the water' dates of the remaining Type 31 ships is commercially sensitive. The disclosure of this information would be prejudicial to commercial interests as the contractor is still in the process of finalising subcontractor supply chain agreements.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Digital Technology****Chi Onwurah:**[\[20064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2020 to Question 9674 on Digital Technology, what progress his Department has made on tackling the root causes of digital exclusion since the publication of the Digital Strategy in March 2017.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

Since the publication of the Digital Strategy, the Government has been tackling the root causes of digital exclusion.

Lack of connectivity is a root cause of digital exclusion. £1.7bn has been spent to bring superfast broadband to over 96% of UK premises and we are continuing to deliver in rural and remote areas of the UK using funds generated from this success. The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review set out Government's ambition for full fibre in the UK, including an 'Outside-In' approach to ensure that those who do not have good connectivity today will soon benefit from it. Government is also working with industry on the Shared Rural Network (SRN) proposals to significantly extend the reach of mobile networks in rural and remote areas.

Further, lack of skills and confidence are also a root cause of digital exclusion. 99% of libraries in England offer free wifi to users; there people can also gain access and support in using computers and other technology to get online and achieve the benefits that digital services can offer. Libraries can also support people with Assisted Digital and they provide access to a wide range of digital public services where individuals are unable to access these services independently. Some library services (such as Leeds and Lewisham) also offer device loans to enable those who are not confident to trial technology such as iPads in their own homes.

Another cause of digital exclusion is inaccessible services for those with access needs, and access to public services, technology and websites is crucial to reducing digital exclusion. Government will always offer support to those who need it to use digital by default public services, be it over the phone, face to face, or via webchat. We call this 'assisted digital support', and it is a requirement of the service standard, which all government services must meet if they are to go onto GOV.UK.

Further, as mentioned in our previous answer of 3 February 2020 to Question 9674, from August of this year the Government will introduce a legal entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills to undertake new digital qualifications free of charge.

**■ Football****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[21968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with (a) UEFA and (b) the Football Association of Wales over the staging of Wales' Euro 2020 games in Azerbaijan and Italy.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

I have spoken to a number of sports governing bodies to ensure they are aware of the latest position from Government and guidance from the health authorities.

We will continue this dialogue and update the relevant stakeholders immediately should advice from the public health authorities change at any point and I know my counterparts in devolved authorities have similarly close engagement. Anyone wishing to travel to Azerbaijan or Italy should consult the foreign travel advice provided by the FCO.

**■ Gambling: Advertising**

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[20552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, which (a) gambling companies and (b) football clubs his Department has met with to discuss gambling advertising in the last six months.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[20554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has discussed gambling advertising with representatives of the Football Association in the last six months.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[20555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of banning gambling advertising as part of the upcoming gambling review.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[20556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a ban on gambling advertising on the gambling industry.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[20557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of gambling advertising on gambling (a) behaviours and (b) addiction.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[20560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, whether he plans to review the Gambling Act 2005.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Ministers and officials have regular meetings with stakeholders on a range of issues. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the government's website at: [https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?content\\_store\\_document\\_type=transparency&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport](https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?content_store_document_type=transparency&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport)

The evidence regarding gambling advertising was examined as part of the government's Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures. The

government's response can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-proposals-for-changes-to-gaming-machines-and-social-responsibility-measures>

The government has committed to a review of the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. Further details will be announced in due course.

## ■ Internet: Data Protection

**Justin Madders:**

[22401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to prevent the concealed microtargeting of people's data.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Data Protection Act 2018 introduced tighter regulation of the way that personal data is collected, stored and processed and includes safeguards such as the right to be forgotten.

Our future work on online targeting will be informed by independent expert advice, including the review of Online Targeting published by the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation on 4 February 2020. The report includes a set of formal recommendations to the government, which we will respond to within six months.

## ■ Mass Media: Regulation

**Fleur Anderson:**

[22436]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to independently regulate the media.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Ofcom is the independent regulator of television and radio, which sets rules for licensed broadcasters to meet under the Communications Act 2003 and Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996. The Government will continue to ensure that Ofcom has the right balance of tools and powers to effectively regulate broadcasters.

There exists an independent self-regulatory system for the press. The majority of traditional news publishers—including 95% of national newspapers by circulation—are members of IPSO. A small number of publishers have joined Impress, while others have chosen to stay outside either self-regulator with their own detailed self-regulatory arrangements.

We have recently published an initial government response to the public consultation on last year's Online Harms White Paper. Our plans for legislation will make companies more responsible for their users' safety online, especially children, and will help build trust in digital markets. Online Harms proposals do not seek to regulate journalistic content. Full details about an exemption for journalistic content will be published in the full Government Response to the Online Harms Consultation later this year.

## ■ National Lottery

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[20409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the National Lottery Act 2006 to safeguard vulnerable players.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The success of the National Lottery has always been to encourage lots of people to play the National Lottery games, while individually spending relatively small amounts. This strategy, in conjunction with the player protection policies of the operator, available here (<https://www.national-lottery.co.uk/responsible-play/consumer-protection-strategy>), and scrutiny from the Gambling Commission, means that we can be confident that National Lottery games have a very low risk of causing harm to players. This is borne out by evidence from the last combined Health Survey, published in September 2018, which showed that problem gambling rates for players of National Lottery draw-based games were 1.0%, while the figure for scratchcards was 1.8%.

Even though the rates are low for lottery games, a good example of the ongoing work on player protection came last year when Camelot withdrew its £10 scratchcard games in light of evidence suggesting an association between these products and problem gambling.

I do not have plans to introduce further legislative change at this stage.

## ■ National Lottery: Licensing

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[20404]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his priorities are for the Fourth National Lottery Licence Competition.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[20407]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Fourth National Lottery Licence Competition is a fair and transparent process.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government and the Gambling Commission share three statutory duties in respect to the National Lottery, which will inform the competition and licence design. These are to ensure that the interests of all players are protected, ensure the Lottery is run with all due propriety, and, subject to these, that returns to good causes are maximised.

The Gambling Commission is running the competition for the next licence, and is following best practice from across the public sector for competitions of this nature. The Gambling Commission is also providing updates on the fourth licence competition. The latest version on their 4NLC website is available at <https://www.4nlc.com/PDF/4NLC-Programme-Update.pdf>

I welcome the Gambling Commission's fair and transparent approach to running a competition process that maximises the opportunities for innovation and creativity whilst protecting the special status of the National Lottery. In particular I am looking forward to a robust competition that draws in a wide range of bidders to ensure the continued success of our National Lottery for the next 25 years and beyond.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[20405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the delay of the Fourth National Lottery Licence Competition on the competition in that sector.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[20408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has had discussions with representatives from the Gambling Commission on (a) the process for the fourth National Lottery licence competition and (b) the delay to the commencement of that competition.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The current National Lottery licence expires in 2023, and the Gambling Commission remains on track to appoint an operator to take on the new licence from this date. The competition is expected to commence in the first half of 2020, with the successful applicant being announced in 2021.

My predecessors met regularly with the Gambling Commission including discussions on the planning for the fourth licence competition. The Secretary of State and I look forward to continuing those discussions, and we will be meeting with the Gambling Commission shortly. DCMS officials are also working closely with the Gambling Commission on the design of the next licence.

## ■ Political Parties: Data Protection

**Justin Madders:** [\[22400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 January 2020 to Question 489, when the Information Commission will provide its final update on the use of personal data in political campaigns to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Information Commissioner's Office has indicated it will provide the Committee with its final update at the Information Commissioner's next appearance at the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. A date for this has not been confirmed yet.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[20394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to promote apprenticeships as an alternative to university.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Our reforms to apprenticeships have fundamentally changed what apprenticeships are. They are now longer and more rigorous with new standards being designed and driven by industry.

We are continuing to promote all apprenticeships as a genuine, high-quality alternative to traditional academic only study for people of all ages and from all backgrounds. We launched the third phase of our apprenticeships marketing campaign, Fire it Up, in January, which promotes how apprenticeships can provide opportunities for ambitious young people.

Our 13<sup>th</sup> annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) took place in February. Nearly 900 events were held across the country, aiming to change perceptions of apprenticeships, promoting them as a high quality alternative to academic study.

In January 2018 we introduced a legal requirement for schools to give training providers the opportunity to talk to pupils about technical qualifications and apprenticeships, so that young people hear about the alternatives to academic routes. We also offer a free service to schools through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) project to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and support they need to enable them to promote apprenticeships, including higher and degree apprenticeships, to their students. In the last academic year, the ASK Programme reached over 300,000 students.

We have also worked with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to support employers to raise awareness of their apprenticeship opportunities to prospective employees through an online higher and degree apprenticeship vacancy listing. We also attended 30 UCAS exhibitions in 2019 to promote apprenticeships, engaging with around 10,000 young people, their parents and careers advisers.

### ■ Erasmus+ Programme

**Layla Moran:**

[\[22426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 21 of the paper entitled, The future relationship with the EU: the UK's approach to negotiations, CP211, if it is his policy to develop an alternative student mobility scheme after the end of the time-limited participation in Erasmus+.

**Michelle Donelan:**

As we have set out in the UK's approach to negotiations, we remain open to the UK participating in elements of the Erasmus+ programme on a time-limited basis provided that the terms are in the UK's interest.

In parallel with the ongoing negotiations, we continue to develop a domestic alternative scheme as part of preparing for every eventuality.

**Further Education: Finance****Sir David Evennett:**[\[20393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of funding for further education institutions.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The government's Spending Round in August 2019 identified the need to increase funding for 16 to 19 year olds' education to ensure that they fulfil their potential and develop the skills that the country needs. That is why we are investing an extra £400 million in 16 to 19 education in 2020-21.

We will increase the base rate of funding by 4.7%, from £4,000 to £4,188, for the academic year 2020/21. This is the biggest injection of new money into 16 to 19 education in a single year since 2010, with funding increasing faster for education for 16 to 19 year olds than in 5 to 16 schooling for 5 to 16 year olds.

Our manifesto committed to spending £1.8 billion on upgrading the further education college estate and we will make further announcements relating to this funding in due course. In addition, we have made available £38 million of capital funding to T level providers in 2020 to ensure they have the facilities and equipment they need to deliver high quality, industry relevant programmes. We have recently announced a further £95 million in capital funding for T level providers in 2021.

**Overseas Students: Entry Clearances****Alicia Kearns:**[\[20613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of changes in the levels of university enrolment among overseas (a) undergraduates and (b) postgraduates as a result of the implementation of a points-based immigration system.

**Michelle Donelan:**

EU and non-EU students make an invaluable contribution to the UK's higher education sector, socially, culturally and financially. The UK Government will continue to welcome international students, working towards the ambition set out in our International Education Strategy, to host 600,000 international students per year by 2030.

The latest data from UCAS's 2019 report shows an increase in international applicants, with EU-domicile applicants increasing by 1% and non-EU-domiciled applicants increasing by 8% from 2018.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students will be covered by the points-based immigration system. This will improve on the current system by simplifying and streamlining the student route for both students and sponsors.

To ensure the UK higher education sector remains internationally attractive, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced the new Graduate Route in September 2019. This will offer an opportunity for international students who have passed their degree to stay and work in the UK for two years post-study.

This announcement enables higher education providers to recruit for the 2020/21 academic year on the basis that their students will be eligible for the graduate route, and ensures that all existing students who meet the requirements, and have Tier 4 leave at the point that the route is introduced will be able to benefit.

### ■ Schools: Bexley

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[20392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding his Department has allocated to schools in Bexley in each financial year since 2009-10.

**Nick Gibb:**

The revenue funding allocated for schools for financial years 2009-10 to 2018-19 for Bexley local authority (LA) is shown in the table below.

| <b>FINANCIAL YEAR</b> | <b>BEXLEY LA (£ MILLIONS)</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2009-10               | 177.7                         |
| 2010-11               | 188.4                         |
| 2011-12               | 192.0                         |
| 2012-13               | 196.5                         |
| 2013-14               | 208.7                         |
| 2014-15               | 218.4                         |
| 2015-16               | 228.3                         |
| 2016-17               | 230.1                         |
| 2017-18               | 236.7                         |
| 2018-19               | 242.9                         |

**■ Schools: Finance****Mike Kane:****[22393]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which local authorities have (a) been granted permission to move (i) up to 0.5 per cent, (ii) between 0.51 and 1 per cent and (iii) over 1 per cent of schools block funding to high needs block funding, (b) been denied permission to move schools block funding to high needs block funding and (c) made a request to move schools block funding to high needs block funding but no decision has yet been made; and what criteria his Department uses to determine those requests.

**Nick Gibb:**

In total, 25 local authorities submitted a request to my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, to move schools block funding to high needs block funding. All schools block movement requests are reviewed against the criteria set out in paragraphs 261-286 of the 'Schools revenue funding operational guide: 2020 to 2021', which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-16-schools-funding-local-authority-guidance-for-2020-to-2021>.

Of these 25 requests, the following were granted permission to move funding from the schools block to the high needs block:

- no requests to move up to 0.50%;
- one request, from Kent County Council, to move between 0.51% and 1%; and
- two requests, from Rotherham and South Gloucestershire local authorities, to move 1%.

The remaining 22 requests to move funding away from the schools block were denied.

All decisions have been made as advised in Table A.

**Attachments:**

1. 22393\_table [22393\_table\_schools\_block\_funding\_\_move\_decision\_outcomes..pdf]

**■ STEM Subjects: Ethnic Groups****Chi Onwurah:****[20484]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage BAME participation in (a) the study of STEM subjects and (b) STEM careers.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government continues to invest in a number of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching of STEM subjects in schools and encourage more students from all backgrounds into STEM education and training, at all stages from primary school to higher education.

The Department has created a national network of 37 school-led Maths Hubs to help schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching for all pupils based on best practice. We have also introduced the £76 million Teaching for Mastery programme,

which is bringing mastery teaching to 11,000 schools across England between 2016 and 2023.

The Department has introduced the Advanced Maths Premium (AMP) to support the education sector to increase the number of students studying high-quality maths qualifications to Level 3. The AMP provides £600 additional funding per year for each additional student taking a Level 3 mathematics qualification in comparison to a baseline.

The Department is prioritising and investing in digital education, building a diverse pipeline of talent which is critical to supporting the UK's long-term economic ambitions. In November 2018, we launched the National Centre for Computing Education, supported by £84 million of new funding, to improve computing education, through high-quality training and resources.

The Department continues to fund the network of 41 Science Learning Partnerships, which offers bespoke advice and continuous professional development to support schools in overcoming barriers to offering GCSE triple science. While triple science provides a good foundation to study all three sciences at A-Level, we recognise that those students who study triple science are more likely to study science at A-Level.

The Department funds the Stimulating Physics Network to provide support to schools to improve progression to physics A-Level, as well as Isaac Physics, an online education platform, which aims to increase and prepare the numbers of students who choose to study physics at university.

The Department is also improving STEM careers advice in schools and colleges. The Careers & Enterprise Company is working with Local Enterprise Partnerships to make sure that experience with STEM employers for all young people is built into careers and enterprise plans. We are also working with businesses, educators and learned societies to understand what the gaps and barriers are for people entering the STEM industry.

## ■ Students: Loans

**Scott Benton:**

[\[20538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the ineligibility for student loans of students at private higher education institutions on the (a) financial viability of those institutions and (b) their ability to attract students.

**Scott Benton:**

[\[20539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to support private higher education providers in (a) attracting students to their courses and (b) improving (i) their viability and (ii) the diversity of courses on offer to the higher education sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Under the 2017 Higher Education and Research Act, a higher education provider in England that wishes to access public grant funding and/or student support funding, is

required to register with the Office for Students. This applies to those previously known as a 'private' or 'alternative' provider, as well as to existing publicly funded institutions.

Registered providers are regulated by the Office for Students and must meet regulatory requirements, which include conditions surrounding quality and financial viability. Once registered, providers are able to submit to the Student Loans Company the courses they wish to attract student support.

## ■ Teachers: Training

**Tom Hunt:**

[\[20574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that teacher training courses provide for an adequate understanding of special educational needs.

**Nick Gibb:**

The quality of teaching is the most important in-school factor for improving the educational achievements for all children and that this is particularly important for pupils with additional needs.

The new Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework (ITT CCF), published on 1 November 2019, has been designed to ensure the training of teachers includes the support for all pupils to succeed, including those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice. The ITT CCF is based on the best evidence of what works. The framework therefore deliberately does not detail approaches specific to particular additional needs, but what makes the most effective teaching.

When developing the framework, the Department held stakeholder consultations, events and meetings, including SEND themed events. While there were a range of views about things that could or should be included in the framework, there was consensus that our approach of 'quality-first teaching', would be the best way to improve outcomes for all children, particularly those with special educational needs.

In addition to the mandated minimum set out in the ITT CCF, the Department expects ITT providers and their partners to continue to tailor their curricula to the needs of their trainees and the children in the schools where they train and will work.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Flood Control****Dr Julian Lewis:****[20366]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent comparative assessment he has made of the effect of (a) increases in the volume of rainfall and (b) decreases in the volume of river dredging on the (i) quantity and (ii) extent of flooding in each of the last 10 years; if he will make it his policy to increase river dredging; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Dredging is one of the interventions used by the Environment Agency (EA) to manage rivers. The EA prioritises those interventions which achieve the greatest benefit in terms of better protecting people and property from flooding. Dredging and clearing channels are important parts of the EA's maintenance regime. Dredging is used where it is technically effective, good value for money, does not significantly increase flood risk for others downstream, and is environmentally acceptable. Dredging is unlikely to be effective in isolation but it can be part of a solution involving multiple interventions.

A useful reference on the effectiveness of dredging was published by CIWEM in 2014, entitled, 'Floods and dredging, A reality check'.

Other activities the EA uses to manage rivers include clearing aquatic weed within rivers, removing blockages such as shoals of silt, clearing debris from screens and gates and removing obstructions such as trees, so that water can flow freely along the channel.

Over each of the past three years, in real terms, the EA has spent between £45 million and £55 million per year on channel maintenance compared with between £39 million and £55 million per year in each of the three years to April 2013.

Without these interventions more flooding would have occurred over the last decade, although it is difficult to quantify this benefit.

**■ Flood Control: Greater Manchester****Jim McMahon:****[20590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding has been allocated to each Greater Manchester local authority area for flood defence works since 2010.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA) administers Grant in Aid (GiA) funding on behalf of Defra, investing in flood and coastal risk management schemes across England wherever the risk is highest, giving careful consideration to where each scheme will benefit the most people and property. The EA uses a consistent set of criteria to

prioritise funding for schemes proposed by all risk management authorities, which ensures a fair distribution of funding based on agreed priorities, principles and needs.

In Greater Manchester, the EA has invested £50.7 million in flood defences since 2010, providing better protection for around 6,020 homes.

The table below shows the capital GiA expenditure on flood and coastal erosion risk management between April 2010 and March 2019, by local authority, within Greater Manchester. This include schemes led by the EA and by the local authorities.

| <b>LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>                 | <b>2010/11 TO 2018/19 GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT (£K)</b> |
|--|--|
| Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council    | 1,353  |
| Bury Metropolitan Borough Council      | 6,605  |
| Manchester City Council                | 2,001  |
| Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council    | 2,654  |
| Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council  | 2,756  |
| Salford City Council                   | 16,277   |
| Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council | 1,126  |
| Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council  | 1,278  |
| Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council  | 67   |
| Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council     | 16,575   |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>50,692</b>  |

#### ■ Flood Control: Shropshire

**Mark Pritchard:**

[\[20430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Shropshire Council on improving flood defences in (a) Albrighton and (b) Shifnal.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Officers from the Environment Agency have been working in partnership with Shropshire Council along with the National Flood Forum, Albrighton Community Flood Action Group and Shifnal Community Flood Action Group to come up with measures that will manage flood risk locally. This work is ongoing.

## ■ Flood Control: York

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[20477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to allocate additional funding to compensate City of York Council for the emergency expenditure it is incurring on prolonged flood readiness measures.

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[20478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to compensate local authorities in areas at high risk of flooding that have yet to flood for maintaining emergency flood defence measures for a prolonged period.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In cases of localised flooding, we expect local authorities to have well established contingency measures in place and both the existing budgets and resources to respond and support their local communities.

The emergency Bellwin scheme was activated after Storm Ciara on 10 February and Storm Dennis on 17 February 2020. The scheme was activated for qualifying areas in West Yorkshire, Cumbria and Lancashire which have seen significant impacts following Storm Ciara. It has also been activated for qualifying areas in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Worcestershire and Herefordshire which have seen significant impacts following Storm Dennis. Under the scheme, local authorities dealing with the flooding can apply to have 100% of their eligible costs, above a threshold, reimbursed by the government. This could be for items including rest centres, temporary accommodation and staff overtime.

## ■ Floods: Insurance

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[20421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect people on universal credit who live in flood risk areas and who may be unable to afford flood insurance premiums.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Flood Re, launched in 2016, is a joint initiative between Government and industry designed to improve the availability and affordability of flood insurance for households at high risk of flooding.

Flood Re allows insurance companies to pass on the flood risk element of household insurance policies to them for a below market rate set premium. Premiums charged by Flood Re to insurers are based on the Council Tax band of the property. This means that people on universal credit who live in flood risk areas will benefit from Flood Re. From May 2019, 99% of households with prior flood claims can now receive quotes from 5 or more insurers due to Flood Re. Four out of five householders with a prior flood claim saw price reductions of over 50%.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[20422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect people living in rented accommodation in flood-risk areas who cannot afford flood insurance premiums.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Flood Re, launched in 2016, is a joint initiative between Government and industry designed to improve the availability and affordability of flood insurance for households at high risk of flooding. Flood Re allows insurance companies to pass on the flood risk element of household insurance policies to them for a below market-rate set premium.

For renters, insurers can ask Flood Re to cover the flood risk part of a contents insurance policy, as long as the property meets certain criteria, including: being used for private; residential purposes; having a domestic Council Tax band A to H; being a single residential unit or building comprising two or three units; being insured on an individual basis; and being built before 01/01/2009.

#### ■ Sites of Special Scientific Interest

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[22422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of designating a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on local landowners; and what support he provides to landowners affected by lower property values as a result of the designation of an SSSI.

**Rebecca Pow:**

A Natural England commissioned report of March 2011 examined the impact that Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status has on land values in England. The report concluded that impacts are variable, with valuers reporting positive, negligible and negative impacts depending on the context and land use of individual cases. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

Notification of SSSIs falls to Natural England. It must notify all owners and occupiers where it considers an area to be of special interest. This will usually follow informal discussion with the owners and occupiers of the land, including discussion about management.

Consensus between regulators, land managers, users and other stakeholders is generally required in order to deliver positive conservation outcomes for SSSIs. Agri-environment schemes like Countryside Stewardship provide the principal funding mechanism to help land managers meet the cost of positive management to restore SSSIs to, or maintain them in, favourable condition.

## ■ UN Convention on Biological Diversity

**Deidre Brock:**

[\[20513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to encourage other countries to improve their ambitions at the forthcoming Convention on Biological Diversity COP.

**Rebecca Pow:**

At the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15, to be held in Kunming, China in October 2020, the 196 Parties to the CBD are set to adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The UK is seeking an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to spur global action, recognising the transformative change needed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. The Government wants to see new targets agreed that are ambitious, implementable and measurable.

We are proactively engaging in the CBD process in the lead up to CBD COP15. UK officials are currently attending the second CBD Open Ended Working Group in Rome where negotiations on the proposed post-2020 framework are beginning. The UK is holding an extensive program of meetings with member countries to form ongoing working partnerships, to secure agreement for an ambitious post-2020 framework.

Outside of the formal CBD process ministers, officials and our diplomatic network will continue to press to raise ambition and secure ambitious outcomes and delivery, notably with China as the host of CBD COP15.

We are focusing, among other topics, on the contribution of nature-based solutions to climate change mitigation and on effective and supportive communications to spur global ambition in the time leading to CBD COP15. The UK is also leading the Global Ocean Alliance in support of a new global target of protecting at least 30% of the global ocean within Marine Protected Areas by 2030.

The UK-led Global Ocean Alliance is currently made up of 12 countries (Belgium, Belize, Costa Rica, Finland, Gabon, Kenya, Nigeria, Palau, Portugal, Seychelles, Sweden, Vanuatu) and we are proactively lobbying many more countries to join.

## ■ Wildlife: Crime

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[20567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much funding his Department has allocated to tackle wildlife crime in each of the last three years.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Under our four year funding agreement with the National Wildlife Crime Unit, Defra has contributed £165,000 a year between 2016-2020 to the Unit's activities. We have committed to maintaining the Defra contribution in 2020/21.

Furthermore, we provide up to £6.3 million per year to support international action to counter poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ Egypt: Gaza

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[19840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on people living in Gaza of the construction of a wall by the Egyptian Government along their respective borders.

**James Cleverly:**

We remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Gaza and support the Palestinian Authority returning to administer Gaza. Egypt has a right to secure borders, and we continue urging Egypt to show maximum flexibility in opening the Rafah crossing. Officials from our Embassy in Cairo raised the Rafah crossing with the Egyptian authorities on 19 December 2019, highlighting the need to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Ministers and officials regularly raise the situation in Gaza with the Egyptian Government both in London and in Cairo, and will continue to do so.

### ■ Falkland Islands: UK Trade with EU

**Martin Vickers:**

[\[20445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to retain the Falkland Islands' tariff free access to EU markets in relation to meat and fish products following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, in the event that a free trade deal is not secured.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government liaises closely with the Overseas Territories on all aspects of our future relationship with the EU and so understands fully the interests of the Falkland Islands in this regard.

As the Government starts negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with the EU, the Government will negotiate on behalf of all the territories for whose international relations it is responsible, including the Falkland Islands, and seek outcomes that support their security and their economies.

### ■ Greece: Turkey

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[20413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on diplomatic tensions between Greece and Turkey.

**Wendy Morton:**

On 3 March 2020, as part of wider discussions of regional and bilateral issues, the Foreign Secretary discussed with Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the UK's concern about irregular migration on the Greece-Turkey border, currently a source of tension between the two countries. He also paid respect to the fact that Turkey has helped support millions of Syrian refugees. This conversation built upon wider dialogue we have with counterparts about diplomatic tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean region. We judge it is critical for stability in the Eastern Mediterranean that disputes between Greece and Turkey are resolved only through constructive dialogue and in accordance with international law.

**India: Nationality****Catherine West:**[\[22019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the (a) recent violence in Delhi and other major Indian cities and (b) prevention of further outbreaks of violence in protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

**Nigel Adams:**

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions across India are following reports on the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) as well as the Government of India's response. We raise our concerns with the Government of India where we have them. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and South Asia discussed the CAA with a senior member of India's Ministry of External Affairs on 25 February. The British High Commission in New Delhi also raised our concerns about the Act and response to protests with the State Government of Uttar Pradesh on 7 February.

We urge restraint from all parties involved and trust the Indian government to address the concerns of people of all religions.

**Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review****Nia Griffith:**[\[21185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy will be completed before the finalisation of a UK-EU security partnership.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 2 March 2020]:* The main bulk of the integrated review is expected to conclude in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review later this year, although implementation of its recommendations will be a multi-year project.

**Iran: Detainees****Emily Thornberry:** [\[21918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart on the physical wellbeing of (a) Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe and (b) other UK dual nationals detained in Iranian jails since the outbreak of covid-19 in detention centres in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 3 March 2020]:* We are concerned about reports of the presence of coronavirus in Evin prison. Our Ambassador to Iran has consistently raised this with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and alongside France and Germany we have offered Iran a package of both material and financial support to combat the rapid spread of the disease. We call on the Iranian Government to immediately allow health professionals into Evin prison to assess the situation of British-Iranian dual nationals there. The welfare of all British nationals imprisoned in Iran remains our top priority.

**Iraq: Christianity****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[20418\]](#)

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

**James Cleverly:**

The human rights situation for Christians in Iraq continues to be a matter of concern. The UK regularly engages with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the need to protect the rights of Christians and other religious minorities.

**Languages****Emily Thornberry:** [\[21176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with UN counterparts on the UN finding that two indigenous languages are disappearing each month.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Government is fully committed to promoting and protecting human rights for all individuals, including indigenous people, without discrimination on any grounds. The UK works both bilaterally and through international institutions such as the United Nations to improve the situation of indigenous people around the world. In 2007, the UK supported the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and has signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages.

## ■ Lebanon: Economic Situation

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[20419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the economic situation in Lebanon.

**James Cleverly:**

We are concerned about the current situation in Lebanon. I spoke with Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Zeina Akar on 15 February to discuss the pressing economic situation. The UK and other members of the International Support Group for Lebanon have urged the new government to move forward with reforms that are needed in order to halt the deteriorating economic situation, restore fiscal balance and financial stability and address long standing structural deficiencies in the Lebanese economy. We stand ready to support Lebanon but look to this government to demonstrate its commitment to reform.

## ■ Overseas Trade: EU Law

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[19934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether all trade sanctions to which the UK is subject under EU legislation will be transposed into UK law before 1 January 2021.

**Nigel Adams:**

HMG is transitioning existing EU sanctions regimes into UK law through regulations made under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. Regulations transitioning a number of EU sanctions regimes have already been made since the Act gained Royal Assent in May 2018. We aim to transition the remaining EU sanctions regime into UK law by the end of the Transition Period but, as a safeguard, any sanctions regimes which we do not transition by then will be retained by effect of the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Human Rights

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[18588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has plans to provide the Department for International Trade with information on human rights violations in countries in advance of talks on future trade deals with those countries.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office takes human rights violations very seriously and works to protect and promote human rights globally on behalf of the UK through multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, as well as encouraging private sector initiatives, providing support for civil society and by funding project work. It shares relevant reporting on human rights and a range of other issues on an ongoing basis with other government departments, including with the Department for International Trade, to provide wider context regarding their international priorities.

## ■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights

### Wes Streeting:

[\[20521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Sri Lankan counterpart on that country's decision to withdraw from its commitments under the UN Human Rights Council resolution 30/1 and 34/1; and if he will make a statement.

### Nigel Adams:

*[Holding answer 2 March 2020]:* Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for the Commonwealth and South Asia met the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on 25 February in Geneva to express the UK's serious concern about his country's announcement that it no longer supports the UN Human Rights Council resolution on Sri Lanka, and to urge him to reconsider. On 27 February the UK made clear our continued support for the resolution and its principles of reconciliation, accountability and justice for victims of conflict in a statement delivered at the UN Human Rights Council by the Core Group on Sri Lanka.

## ■ Sri Lanka: Peace Negotiations

### Emily Thornberry:

[\[19785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to (a) promote the peace process in Sri Lanka and (b) support the protection of minority Tamil populations in the north of that country.

### Nigel Adams:

The British Government has been a longstanding supporter of efforts to deliver inclusive reconciliation and accountability following the conflict in Sri Lanka, which we believe remains critical for long-term peace and stability. We reiterated the importance we attach to these issues in the statement of the Core Group on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva on 27 February. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth also met the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Dinesh Gunawardena, on 25 February to press for continued implementation of UNHRC resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1, and to urge the Sri Lankan Government to ensure the protection of Tamil and other minorities in Sri Lanka.

The UK remains committed to supporting peacebuilding, human rights and the rule of law in Sri Lanka for all its communities. Through the British High Commission in Colombo we support land mine clearance, sustainable resettlement and livelihoods amongst displaced communities including in the north of the country, as well as a number of capacity building programmes to strengthen democracy, help deliver security sector reform and modernisation, and support reconciliation.

## ■ Syria: Armed Conflict

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[20050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help end the conflict in Syria.

**James Cleverly:**

Our priority is to end the conflict in Syria through a negotiated political settlement, in accordance with UNSCR 2254. The UK has repeatedly made clear our full support for the UN-led political process. We are active diplomatically in pressing for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Idlib, including by calling for an emergency UN Security Council discussion on 28 February. On 28 January, the UK hosted a meeting of Special Envoys of the Small Group on Syria to discuss how to advance the political process. We are also committed to supporting the victims of this appalling conflict. The Syria crisis has been the UK's biggest ever humanitarian response, with the UK committing £3.1 billion of support to Syria and the region since 2012.

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[20367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his policy is (a) on support for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and (b) Turkish military intervention in northern Syria; what armed forces in Syria the Government supports; what recent assessment he has made of the implications for Article 5 of the NATO Treaty of conflict between (i) Turkish and (ii) other forces in Syria; and if he will make a statement.

**James Cleverly:**

On the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), we pay tribute to courage and sacrifices made by the SDF, as partner of the Global Coalition against Daesh, in successful efforts against Daesh in Syria. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have regular contact with representatives from different Kurdish political groups about the situation in Syria. The UK was clear in its opposition to Turkey's military operation in north-east Syria in October 2019, and welcomes the fact that the ceasefire in this area is broadly holding. On Idlib, we welcome Turkey's diplomatic efforts to seek an urgent and lasting ceasefire which is urgently needed. No request to trigger Article 5 has been made, and any decision on this would be taken collectively by allies at the North Atlantic Council. Finally, I responded to an urgent question on the situation in Idlib on 24 February.

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[20368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the (a) names and (b) political composition are of all groups fighting in Idlib against the Assad regime in Syria; what recent assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of (i) Islamists and (ii) democratic pluralists among those groups; and whether the estimated 70,000 moderate rebel fighters referred to in the oral contribution of the former Prime Minister of 26 November 2015, Official Report, column 1491, have been located in Syria since that date.

**James Cleverly:**

Given the complex and evolving situation on the ground in Syria, it is difficult to assess the political composition, names, and numbers of all groups believed to be fighting in Idlib against the Assad regime or to determine where the moderate fighters referred to by the then Prime Minister in 2015 are now located.

**■ Syria: Overseas Trade****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[19933\]](#)

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

**James Cleverly:**

We regularly review the effectiveness of all sanctions on Syria and consider them an important lever to press the regime to engage seriously in the UN-led peace process. While most EU Syria sanctions are on individuals associated with the Assad regime, the sanctions include restrictions on trade to or for the benefit of the Syrian regime in certain sectors, including (a) goods and technology related to chemical and biological weapons; (b) goods and technology that may be used to repress the civilian population of Syria; (c) interception and monitoring services; (d) military goods and technology; and (e) crude oil and petroleum products from Syria. The UK continues to work closely with European partners to sanction those profiting from the devastating Syrian war while minimising the impact of sanctions on ordinary Syrians. We look to continue implementing the sanctions after December 2020.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Allergies: Medical Equipment****Jim Shannon:**[\[21260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for provision of the new injection to treat nut allergies through the NHS.

**Helen Whately:**

We are aware of a recent trial of the drug Etokimab at Stanford University, to test its effectiveness at treating patients with peanut allergies. While this trial of 15 patients appears promising, larger scale trials would be needed to establish the safety, efficacy and cost effectiveness of Etokimab before it could be considered for routine access on the National Health Service, subject to assessment by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, if appropriate.

**■ Antibiotics: Drug Resistance****Carla Lockhart:**[\[20569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle antibiotic resistance.

**Jo Churchill:**

In recognition of the global threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the United Kingdom Government published its vision to contain and control AMR by 2040 in January 2019. The vision was supported by a five-year national action plan.

The national action plan takes a fully integrated and comprehensive One-Health approach to tackling AMR, with challenging five-year commitments across the spectrum of human and animal health, agriculture, the environment and food, both in the UK and internationally. It includes ambitions to reduce infections and our use of antimicrobials and to support further research to better help target interventions.

A UK cross-Government delivery board drives and oversees implementation of the national action plan. The NHS Long Term Plan includes the commitment to implement the human health aspects of the AMR national action plan.

**■ Cancer: Diagnosis****Craig Tracey:**[\[20566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish data from the field testing for the new faster diagnosis standard for cancer due to be implemented in April 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Faster Diagnosis Standard for cancer is being tested as part of the Clinical Review of Standards. The findings from this testing are due to be published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in the spring.

**■ Cancer: Drugs****Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[20481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle delays in approval by NICE for the use of innovative cancer drugs on the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

New arrangements for the assessment and adoption of new cancer drugs were introduced in 2016 to help improve patient access to new cancer drugs, including through the Government established Cancer Drugs Fund.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is now committed to publishing final guidance within 90 days of a new cancer drug receiving its licence and aims to publish its draft recommendation before a licence is granted. The forecasted mean time from a new cancer drug receiving its licence to published final guidance in 2020/21 is now 1.5 months which is a reduction of 13.5 months from 2012/13. The speed of appraisal output is affected by appeals, late referrals, additional committee meetings and companies negotiating revised timing of appraisals.

**■ Combat Stress**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[22388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding from the public purse his Department has allocated to Combat Stress in each of the last 10 years.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[22389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department plans to allocate from the public purse to Combat Stress in each of the next five years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

From 2015/16 – 2017/18 NHS England and NHS Improvement funded Combat Stress £3.2 million per annum. For the few months Combat Stress delivered the NHS funded contract in 2018/19, £552,000 was given.

This £3.2 million annual allocation was reallocated to fund the Complex Treatment Service in April 2018 to support an enhanced service offer to the Transition Intervention and Liaison service for an increased number of veterans.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have agreed to provide Combat Stress financial support of £1 million per annum for two years with a potential further million in year three subject to a review in year.

The funding has been put in place to ensure that we have continuity of service while providing time for Combat Stress to move to their new operating model.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Flags**

**Philip Davies:** [\[21198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department owns two Union flags, one St George flag and one Flag of Wales. The Department does not own the Scottish Saltire.

**Philip Davies:** [\[21941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

**Edward Argar:**

The Union flag is flown on most days and other flags are occasionally flown for events. The Department does not keep records of how many times flags are flown.

## ■ England Infected Blood Support Scheme

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[22379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will place in the Library (a) the present and previous versions of the (i) memorandum of agreement and (ii) scheme rules for the England Infected Blood Support Scheme, (b) the financial allocations (i) made and (ii) planned to be made to the England Infected Blood Support Scheme in (A) 2019-20, (B) 2020-21 and (C) 2021-22, (c) the accounts of the England Infected Blood Support Scheme for (i) 2017-18 and (ii) 2018-19 and (d) the (i) manuals, (ii) rules of procedure, (iii) guidance documents and (iv) other internal documents provided to staff working for the England Infected Blood Support Scheme in relation to managing claims made by victims of the Infected Blood scandal; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

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

Copies of the Department's memorandum of understanding and service specification with the NHS Business Services Authority to administer EIBSS, the formal financial allocation letters for years 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the EIBSS annual report, including financial summaries, for years 2017/18 and 2018/19 are attached. The allocation for the financial year 2021/22 is yet to be agreed.

All the background information used by EIBSS to administer the scheme is available on the NHS Business Services Authority website at the following link:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/england-infected-blood-support-scheme>

**Attachments:**

1. NHS Business Services Authority Letter [NHSBSA letters.pdf]
2. NHS Business Services Authority Report [NHSBSA reports.pdf]
3. Specification and MoU [Specification and MoU.pdf]

## ■ Gambling: Products

**Carolyn Harris:**

[\[20558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if Public Health England's gambling-related harms evidence review will include consideration of the potential merits of (a) safety testing and (b) classification of industrialised gambling products.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England's (PHE's) gambling-related harms evidence review will examine the prevalence, determinants and harms associated with gambling, and the social and economic burden of gambling-related harms.

The review is considering a range of available evidence on the harms and risk factors of gambling in England. Policies and interventions are not in scope, so the potential

merits of safety testing and classification of industrialised gambling products will not be considered. However, as the review is ongoing, PHE cannot currently say if evidence of harms associated with these topics will be included in the final report.

The review is due to be published in spring 2020. More information on the scope of the review, including the aims and objectives and methods used, can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review>

## ■ Health: Disadvantaged

**Carla Lockhart:** [20572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will develop a national strategy for reducing health inequalities.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government is committed to levelling up the whole country. Every single person deserves to lead a long and healthy life, no matter who they are, where they live or their social circumstances.

The Prevention Green Paper reflected the need to reduce inequalities and to level up and we are considering how best this can be delivered.

## ■ Hepatitis: Screening

**Jeff Smith:** [20617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who are in contact with drug treatment services are tested for hepatitis C.

**Jeff Smith:** [20618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many needle and syringe distribution points there are in England.

**Jeff Smith:** [20619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Government drugs policy in reducing the rate of new hepatitis C infections.

**Jo Churchill:**

Local authorities are responsible for assessing local needs and commissioning drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction services to meet these needs. This includes making sure people in this high-risk population are screened for hepatitis C virus and identified for treatment when they access these services.

Public Health England (PHE) provides a range of drug and alcohol treatment data to local authorities which monitors national and local activity in drug treatment settings

and can inform local commissioning of services. This includes the number of people in drug treatment who have been tested for hepatitis C.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have an Elimination Programme Partnership with the Pharmaceutical Industry and work closely with Gilead Sciences, who have hepatitis C Testing projects with the six largest groups of National Health Service and independent sector treatment providers in England covering approximately 95% of the available addiction services. Their plan is that 'everybody tests, and everybody is tested'; all staff can carry out tests and they target 100% of their population. Those in contact with drug treatment services in secure and detained settings are engaged through reception in a programme of 'opt out' blood borne virus testing covering hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus. Those already within the prison are targeted through a rolling programme of 'whole population' testing.

Local authorities are also responsible for commissioning needle and syringe programmes in their areas. The number of needle and syringe programmes in England is not recorded centrally.

#### ■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Sales**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[21266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent the online sale of Hormone Replacement Therapy.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

In the United Kingdom, there are strict legal controls on the retail sale, supply and advertisement of medicinal products. Specifically, in relation to Prescription Only Medicines, these must be legally sold or supplied at registered pharmacy premises by, or under the supervision of, a pharmacist, in accordance with a prescription given by an appropriate practitioner. An appropriate practitioner includes a European Economic Area registered healthcare provider. These legal controls apply equally to medicines sold or supplied via internet or e-mail transactions.

#### ■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages**

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[20489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendation of 7 February 2020 by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, if he will convene a working group with industry, regulatory agencies and professional bodies to tackle the HRT shortages.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are in regular discussions with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists about hormone replacement therapy (HRT) supply issues and are currently reviewing their proposal to convene a working group with industry, regulatory agencies and professional bodies to tackle this supply issue.

We continue to work with the Royal College as well as a number of other stakeholders including the National Health Service, the pharmaceutical industry, the

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the British Menopausal Society and the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare to resolve HRT supply issues as quickly as possible. The overall supply situation will start to improve from the end of February 2020.

#### ■ **Joint Replacements: Leeds**

**Hilary Benn:** [\[21146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in the area covered by Leeds clinical commissioning group waited more than 18 weeks for surgery after referral for a (a) hip and (b) knee replacement in each of the last five years.

**Edward Argar:**

The attached table shows the total number of the number of hip and knee replacement procedures and the amount that waited longer than 18 weeks from pathway start.

The data shows the number of procedures per year between the periods 2014/15 – 2018/19.

It should be noted that the data does not show individual patients as the same person may have been admitted into a National Health Service hospital on more than one occasion.

**Attachments:**

1. PQ21146 table [PQ21146 table.docx]

#### ■ **Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust**

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[20625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps Kent and Medway NHS trust has taken to ensure the safe and effective treatment of patients since the Care Quality Commission reports on that trust and the case of Callie Lewis.

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[21287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the steps taken by Kent and Medway NHS Trust in response to the findings of the inquest into the death of Callie Lewis.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Trust has confirmed that, after the death of Callie Lewis in the summer of 2018, it has updated its suicide prevention training to include a section on autism. It has released a new strategy, under which suicide prevention training is a mandatory, annual requirement for all staff in inpatient, liaison psychiatry and crisis settings. The Trust has also included in its training materials information about the harm that suicide forums pose to vulnerable people.

We would expect a National Health Service trust and its responsible clinical commissioning group to ensure the effectiveness of any actions taken to improve and

increase safety in a trust's services. In addition, the Care Quality Commission is responsible for monitoring and inspecting all health care services. It continues to discuss the implementation of the Trust's improvements at regular engagement meetings and will consider these at future inspections.

## ■ Malnutrition

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[21273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) enable and (b) support prevention of malnutrition at a community level.

**Jo Churchill:**

Malnutrition (or under-nutrition), is both a cause and a consequence of ill health and the government recognises the multiple complex issues associated with it.

Public Health England has published an evidence review which considers what works in supporting older people to maintain a healthy diet and reduce the risk of malnutrition in a community setting. The review can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-older-people-maintain-a-healthy-diet-a-review-of-what-works/helping-older-people-maintain-a-healthy-diet-a-review-of-what-works>

Government advice is that most people should follow a diet in line with the United Kingdom's national food model, the Eatwell Guide. Those who are underweight may need more energy or nutrient-dense foods and drinks. The Eatwell Guide is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence 2012 quality standard 'Nutrition support in adults' provides advice to the National Health Service to help identify people who are either malnourished or at risk of malnutrition in hospital or in the community. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs24>

## ■ Mental Health Services

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[20621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of caseloads for community mental health teams; and whether he has plans to allocate additional funding from the public purse to support those teams.

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[20622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take steps to ensure that community mental health workers are able to manage their caseloads.

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[21285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) quality of care and (b) adequacy of support provided to mental health patients by caseworkers in community mental health teams.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The mental health workforce plan, 'Stepping Forward: a mental health workforce plan for England' sets out an ambition for 21,000 new posts across the mental health system occupied by 19,000 new staff. This plan also includes the aim for 6000 full time posts in mental health trusts to come through improved retention.

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, we have announced a £975 million investment in transforming community mental health services. The first tranche of funding will provide 12 pilot sites with 1,000 extra staff and bring together primary and specialist care to better support people's physical and mental health and better link with other local services such as housing.

**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[21225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 February 2020 to Question 15025 on Mental Health Services, what plans he has to provide access to talking therapies in addition to IAPT for patients in the NHS in England.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Local clinical commissioning groups should commission services that meet the needs of their local communities. Based on their assessment of local need, this may include offering talking therapies outside of, and in addition to, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services.

■ **Mental Health Services: Hospital Beds****Ellie Reeves:** [\[20628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of mental health bed availability.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The most recent information on mental illness bed availability is shown in the following table.

| YEAR    | PERIOD | AVAILABLE | OCCUPIED | OCCUPANCY RATE |
|---------|--------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| 2018/19 | Q1     | 18,395    | 16,519   | 89.8%          |
| 2018/19 | Q2     | 18,311    | 16,431   | 89.7%          |
| 2018/19 | Q3     | 18,389    | 16,285   | 88.6%          |
| 2018/19 | Q4     | 18,368    | 16,378   | 89.2%          |
| 2019/20 | Q1     | 18,270    | 16,375   | 89.6%          |

| YEAR    | PERIOD | AVAILABLE | OCCUPIED | OCCUPANCY RATE |
|---------|--------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| 2019/20 | Q2     | 18,179    | 16,284   | 89.6%          |
| 2019/20 | Q3     | 18,097    | 16,187   | 89.4%          |

Notes:

- The data are very limited in terms of what they tell us about mental health bed availability and should therefore be treated with caution for the following reasons:
- The 'mental illness' category covers a huge range of inpatient mental health settings which provide very different services for people with different needs. As such, it does not provide the granularity of information required to identify where there might be particular pressures in the mental health system.
- They only cover beds in services that are consultant-led.
- It is very difficult to assess the accuracy of the aggregate data submitted and the accompanying guidance has not been updated since the Department published it in 2010.

Source: NHS England: KH03 data collection

■ **Mental Health Services: Sick Leave**

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[20623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the judgment in the case of Callie Lewis, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (a) community mental health and (b) Kent & Medway NHS Trust caseworker cases are covered when they are on sick leave.

**Helen Whately:**

It is the responsibility of each National Health Service organisation to determine how they manage cover for sick leave with guidance available from both NHS Employers and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have informed us that Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust's sickness absence is managed in accordance with trust policy and reviewed on a monthly basis.

■ **Mental Health Services: Standards**

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[20624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason patient satisfaction of England's community mental health services has decreased in each of the last five years; and what plans he has to reverse that trend.

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[20627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of community mental health funding.

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[20629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to close the gaps in community mental health service provision.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We recognise that community mental health services need to evolve and expand. Through the NHS Long Term Plan, we have committed to investing £975 extra million per year by 2023/24 in transformed models of integrated primary and community mental health care. These new models will be based on the Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults, published in September 2019, which provides a blueprint for change.

#### ■ **Mental Health Services: Vacancies**

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[20631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Improvement Report 2018-19, Q4, what steps he is taking to fill the 10,000 unfilled posts across all mental health services.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The NHS People Plan, which will be published by the National Health Service in early 2020, will set out a clear framework for collective action on workforce priorities, with a focus on growing and sustaining a well-skilled workforce across the whole NHS and will build upon the progress made through the Mental Health Workforce Plan (published by Health Education England in July 2017).

NHS Improvement has developed a shared learning resource to improve staff retention, including case studies to highlight the great work taking place across the service to tackle this specific challenge.

#### ■ **Mental Health Services: Working Hours**

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[20626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure adequate 24-hour crisis care is available for community mental health patients throughout the UK.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Under the NHS Long Term Plan, we are investing an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24 in mental health services. Much of this increased investment will be used to increase community-based early intervention and crisis care services as an alternative to hospital admission and ensure timely, universal mental health crisis care for everyone.

We have set out ambitious measures to improve crisis care services including a new national single point of access to crisis care via NHS 111, new mental health transport vehicles and better training for ambulance staff to deal with mental health crises as well as increased investment in complementary and alternative crisis services (sanctuaries, crisis houses etc).

## ■ **Mental Health: Veterans**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[22363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the trends in the level of mental health issues experienced by former armed forces personnel; and how much funding his Department plans to allocate to the (a) treatment of and (b) suicide prevention for those personnel in the next three years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Veteran mental health needs are very often no different to those of the general population. Data has shown that most patients suffer from common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety and readily make use of the mainstream mental health services provided throughout the United Kingdom.

In England, bespoke veteran mental health services receive £10.2 million funding each year. This will increase by an extra £5 million which will go towards developing a High Intense Service to help veterans nearing crisis.

Every local authority has a multi-agency suicide prevention plan in place and we are investing almost £600,000 in 2019/20 to support local authorities to strengthen their plans. From 2019/20, we are also investing £57 million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long-Term Plan. This will see investment in all areas of the country by 2023/24 to support local suicide prevention plans and establish suicide bereavement support services.

## ■ **Ovarian Cancer: Romford**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[20412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were diagnosed with ovarian cancer in Romford constituency in 2019.

**Jo Churchill:**

This information is not held centrally.

## ■ **Paediatric Acute-onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[22390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness among GPs of paediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[22391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that children and young people with paediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome have access to (a) NHS treatment and (b) education opportunities.

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[22392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle the misdiagnosis of paediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We recognise that more research is necessary to understand the multiple factors leading to paediatric acute-onset childhood neuropsychiatric symptoms and how best to raise awareness among general practitioners on how to diagnose this condition and support affected children and their families.

General practitioners are responsible for ensuring their own clinical knowledge remains up-to-date and for identifying learning needs as part of their continuing professional development. This includes taking account of new research and guidance. Training on paediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome is included in the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health curriculum.

Children with these conditions should be offered the evidence-based treatments for their physical and psychiatric symptoms in line with national guidance and with the involvement of multidisciplinary teams. Accessing education opportunities is a matter for the Department for Education.

## ■ Palliative Care: Finance

**Alex Sobel:** [\[22427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional funding he plans to allocate to (a) hospice and (b) palliative care services in the next five years.

**Alex Sobel:** [\[22428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer on 30 September 2019 to Question HL17641, on Palliative Care: Finance, what discussions he has had with representatives from NHS England on its review of the decision to not continue a separate funding stream for hospice and palliative care services beyond 2019-20.

**Helen Whately:**

No specific discussions have taken place. On 20 August 2019, the Government announced £25 million in funding to help alleviate pressures on hospices and boost local palliative care services, and to provide for new services such as out-of-hours support, respite care and specialist community teams. Clinical commissioning groups resource allocations were uplifted to reflect the new funding in October 2019, with clear guidance to work collaboratively to assign the money to hospices and palliative

services as a Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) across their STP footprint.

This non-recurrent funding is for hospices and palliative services and relates to 2019/20 only. NHS England's expectation is that, as the NHS Long Term Plan progresses and more of the Government's £33.9 billion additional investment in the National Health Service becomes available to the front-line, a separate funding stream should not be required in future years.

#### ■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Diagnosis**

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[20577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle regional disparities in early diagnosis rates for pancreatic cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

Cancer Alliances are working with local sustainability and transformation partnerships and integrated care systems to improve care and reduce variation across whole patient pathways.

#### ■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Mortality Rates**

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[20580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the rates of (a) one-month, (b) one-year and (c) five-year survival of pancreatic cancer in the last three decades; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[20581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve (a) one-month, (b) one-year and (c) five-year survival rates for people with pancreatic cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

Diagnosing pancreatic cancer at an earlier stage will contribute to improved survival rates. Increasing the number of cancers that are diagnosed earlier is a top priority for the National Health Service. The NHS Long Term Plan sets an ambition to diagnose 75% of cancers at stage 1 or 2 by 2028, up from the current rate of around 50%. In delivering this, NHS England and NHS Improvement aim to see 55,000 more people a year surviving cancer for five years by 2028.

Actions to improve early diagnosis include setting up Rapid Diagnostic Centres and committing up to £100 million to roll out innovative approaches and technologies, helping diagnose more cancers at an earlier stage.

**■ Pancreatic Cancer: Surgery****Stephanie Peacock:** [\[20578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the number of surgical procedures for people with pancreatic cancer in (a) South Yorkshire, Bassetlaw, North Derbyshire and Hardwick Cancer Alliance and (b) England.

**Jo Churchill:**

This information is not available as requested, and so no assessment has been made.

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[20579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people with pancreatic cancer can receive surgery.

**Jo Churchill:**

Increasing access to treatment by reducing variation and introducing new treatments as they become available will improve survival and are key ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan.

**■ Pancreatic Cancer: Surrey and Sussex****Henry Smith:** [\[20451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of surgery rates for people with pancreatic cancer in Surrey and Sussex and those rates in other areas of England; and what steps his Department plans to take to improve surgery rates in Surrey and Sussex.

**Jo Churchill:**

This information is not available as requested, and so no assessment has been made.

**Henry Smith:** [\[20452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the levels of late diagnosis rates for people with pancreatic cancer in Surrey and Sussex; and what steps he is taking to ensure that people in those counties receive an earlier diagnosis for pancreatic cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

The latest NHS England data shows that the late diagnosis rates for pancreatic cancer in Surrey and Sussex increased between 2016 and 2017, from 78.2% to 81.9%.

Early diagnosis rates for pancreatic cancer in England increased by 2.9 percentage points between 2014 and 2017, from 21.0% to 23.9%, and improving early diagnosis of cancer is a top priority for the National Health Service. That is why one of the core ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan is to diagnose 75% of cancers at stage 1 or 2 by 2028 to save 55,000 lives a year. Cancer Alliances in England are using the

Rapid Diagnostic Cancer model to improve the diagnostic experience for patients who are suspected of having particular cancers including pancreatic cancer.

#### ■ Pelvic Health Clinics

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[21175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of potential demand for pelvic health clinics.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England advise that academic research indicates that a significant number of women experience incontinence and other pelvic floor conditions following pregnancy. Through feedback from National Health Service staff and patient representatives, NHS England have assessed that there is a need for the NHS to do more to help women recover from the physical impact of pregnancy.

Local Maternity Systems have all been asked to develop a local plan to improve postnatal care and they have been specifically asked to consider pelvic health as part of this. In addition, the NHS Long Term Plan commits investment to ensure that women have access to multidisciplinary pelvic health clinics and pathways. These clinics will be available in limited areas from 2020/21 and rolled out across the country by 2023/24.

NHS England and the British Medical Association have agreed a 6-8 week postnatal maternal check for all mothers from 1 April. This will including a focus on pelvic health, which should help improve rates of detection postnatally.

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ Deportation: Charter Flights

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[22435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has chartered flights scheduled for deportations in 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

Most enforced immigration returns are undertaken using scheduled flights, alongside fare-paying passengers. However, charter flight operations are an important means to return foreign national offenders and immigration offenders where there are limited scheduled routes or where the returnees may be disruptive. We utilise both approaches flexibly to best meet operational needs, maximise value for money for the taxpayer and keep our street safe.

For operational reasons, it is not possible to disclose full details of the future returns charter flight programme.

**■ Drugs: Misuse****Ronnie Cowan:** [\[22419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who the attendees of the summit on tackling drug misuse held in Glasgow on 27 February 2020 were.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The UK Drugs Summit brought together healthcare professionals, drug recovery experts, senior police officers, voluntary sector organisations, Ministers and officials from the UK Government and devolved administrations, those with lived experience of drug dependence and experts from the US and Portugal.

**■ Home Office: Third Sector****Robert Halfon:** [\[20454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding she has allocated to civil society and campaigning bodies in each of the last three years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Civil Society forms an essential part of our communities up and down the country. It includes large, national charities, social enterprises, volunteers and small grassroots organisations but what joins them all is the idea of creating social value to help build a better society.

Government funding to civil society is ring-fenced for particular projects or programmes. Grant agreement terms and conditions prohibit grant funding being used for paid for lobbying and political campaigning.

Information on grants awarded to civil society can be found be here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-grants-register>

Published grant funding that was approved and was made available to organisations categorised as civil societies by the Home Office for following financial years was:

2017-18: £23,608,511

2016-17: £24,563,857

2015-16: £20,642,744

Information for financial year 2018-19 is not yet published.

**■ Immigration: EU Nationals****Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[20596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the comparative accessibility of the application process for the EU Settlement Scheme for vulnerable people (a) with and (b) without support provided by voluntary and civil society organisations.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[20597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to make a decision on the future of grant funding for the provision of support for vulnerable people applying to the EU Settlement Scheme from voluntary and civil society organisations.

**James Brokenshire:**

There have already been more than 2.5 million people given status through the settlement scheme. The Home Office is always looking at ways to make sure everyone secures the status they are eligible for.

As well as providing funding for charities which have supported hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people, there are more than 1,500 Home Office staff working on the EU Settlement Scheme and 250 Settlement Resolution Centre staff providing assistance to applicants with any questions about the scheme or who need help applying.

Additional support is also available to those EU citizens in the UK who do not have the appropriate access, skills or confidence to apply. This includes over 300 assisted digital locations across the UK where people can be supported through their application.

It is one of several ways people can verify their identity, including by post. There are also over 80 locations where applicants can have their passport scanned and verified across the UK.

The current grant funding scheme continues until the end of March 2020, and the Home Office is currently exploring options

**■ Immigration: India****Gareth Thomas:**[\[22351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the outcomes of the UK-India Migration Dialogue were; and if she will make a statement.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has a strong and enduring relationship with the people and Government of India, covering the breadth of the justice and home affairs agenda.

The UK-India Migration Dialogue was introduced in January 2019 as a forum to progress matters relating specifically to migration and mobility. During the January 2019 Dialogue discussions focused on the future of the UK's Border and Immigration System, following publication of the Immigration White Paper in December 2018. We have since discussed the Government's published policy statement outlining the principles of the UK's Points-Based Immigration System.

We anticipate positive future dialogues as we introduce our firmer and fairer points based system which is based on what someone has to offer the UK, not where their passport is from.

**■ Migrant Workers: Fisheries****Angus Brendan MacNeil:** [\[22380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when non-EEA fishermen will be able to gain employment on fishing boats on the west coast of Scotland.

**Kevin Foster:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to PQ 19790 on 27 February 2020.

**■ Police: Ethnic Groups****Carla Lockhart:** [\[20575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of police officers in England and Wales are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes information on the ethnicity of police officers, in the 'Police Workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin.

As at 31 March 2019, 7% of police officers in England and Wales were from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

**■ Visas: Fees and Charges****Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[20632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost will be of the visa application process for migrants seeking to enter the UK after January 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

The UK's Points-Based Immigration System Policy Statement published on 19 February sets out how we will fulfil our commitment to the British public and take back control of our borders.

People coming to the UK from any country in the world for the purpose of work or study, other than some short-term business visitors and short-term students, will need to obtain a visa for which they will pay a fee. A list of current fees can be found via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-fees-transparency-data>

The Borders, Immigration and Citizenship System (BICS) is predominately funded by its users. It is right those who use it contribute to its cost, thereby reducing the burden on the UK taxpayer.

We keep our fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensure they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament, as set out in Section 68 (9) of the Immigration Act 2014 .

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Affordable Housing

**John Healey:**

[22361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral contribution of 27 February 2020, Official report, column 509, if he will provide details of the annual amount of grant funding allocated to affordable housing in each of the last 10 financial years.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9 billion available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes in a wide range of tenures.

The table below provides details on affordable homes programme funding since 2010. This data may also be found in the public domain at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-oscar-publishing-from-the-database>

| FINANCIAL YEAR | AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE |
|----------------|--|
| 2010/11        | £2,660,493,213                         |
| 2011/12        | £1,431,994,000                         |
| 2012/13        | £1,136,633,000                         |
| 2013/14        | £1,219,494,000                         |
| 2014/15        | £1,342,398,000                         |
| 2015/16        | £1,256,863,000                         |
| 2016/17        | £747,333,000                           |
| 2017/18        | £1,308,730,000                         |
| 2018/19        | £1,670,312,000                         |

The way in which our delivery partners Homes England and the Greater London Authority allocate this funding across the country is publicly available. To view the further allocations across England regions and local authorities please see the following:

- London funding allocations:  
[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hfl\\_allocations\\_-\\_location\\_and\\_provider.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hfl_allocations_-_location_and_provider.pdf)

- Homes England AHP provider funding:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/865148/Funding\\_by\\_lead\\_provider\\_Final.csv/preview](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865148/Funding_by_lead_provider_Final.csv/preview)

## ■ Community Housing Fund

**John Healey:** [\[20382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated through the Community Housing Fund in each year for which figures are available, by local authority area.

**Christopher Pincher:**

In the attached, Table 1 shows the sums directly allocated from the Community Housing Fund by the Department (and its predecessor, the Department for Communities and Local Government) and Homes England over each of the four years that Fund has been in existence.

In 2016/17, grants were awarded by the Department directly to local authorities.

Over 2017/18, no grant was awarded from the Community Housing Fund.

The figures given in respect of grants allocated to the Greater London Authority in 2018/19 and 2019/20 represent allocations made directly by the Department in order to deliver the Community Housing Fund in London.

All remaining allocations in 2018/19 and 2019/20 were made by Homes England. The figures given in respect of allocations made by Homes England are the sums of the total grant allocated to the respective local authorities and the total grant allocated to community-based organisations within those respective local authority areas. These figures may differ from actual expenditure.

**Attachments:**

1. Table of allocated funds - PQ UIN20382 [PQ 20382 Table 1.docx]

## ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[21234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to encourage local authorities to provide electric charging points in local authority owned car parks.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Parking is the responsibility of local authorities and it is for them to determine what is best for their own area. However, the Government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) offers a comprehensive package of support. This includes grants for supporting consumers to install charging infrastructure at home and funding for local authorities to support those households without off-street parking.

## ■ Fires: Damage

**Steve Reed:**

[\[18688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of fire damage.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As identified in the call for evidence (paragraphs 15 and 16), published in December 2018, the Department intends to assess the scope of the fire safety requirements of the building regulations including the need for property protection objectives as part of the technical review of Approved Document B of the building regulations. The Department will be setting out its intentions shortly.

The call for evidence and a summary of the responses received are available at the following:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-review-of-approved-document-b-of-the-building-regulations-a-call-for-evidence>

The Department has not recently carried out an assessment of fire damage to the public purse however the Department regularly monitors the fire statistics published by the Home Office.

## ■ Local Government Finance

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[20589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Fair Funding Review formula.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government aims to implement the local authority Review of Relative Needs and Resources in 2021-22, and plans to publish a major consultation on this in the Spring. We will place a copy of the consultation in the Library at that time.

## ■ Local Government: Trading Standards

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[21294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local-authority employed trading standards officers were employed in each local authority area in each of the last 10 years.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Department does not hold this information. Local authorities are independent employers and as such are responsible for managing their own workforce, including the numbers employed and the positions held.

**■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Third Sector****Robert Halfon:** [20456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding he has allocated to civil society and campaigning bodies in each of the last three years.

**Luke Hall:**

Civil Society forms an essential part of our communities up and down the country. It includes large, national charities, social enterprises, volunteers and small grassroots organisations but what joins them all is the idea of creating social value to help build a better society. Government funding to civil society is ring-fenced for particular projects or programmes. Grant agreement terms and conditions prohibit grant funding being used for paid for lobbying and political campaigning

Each of the Department's (MHCLG/DCLG) published Annual Report and Financial Accounts lists the charitable bodies and the amounts (Section 70 payments) that were funded by the Department. The Department does not record whether the body is a 'campaigning body'. All grant payments over £25,000 are published as part of the Government Transparency routine.

Our published Annual Report and Financial Accounts (and lists the charitable body payments) can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dclg-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT****■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Robert Largan:** [901099]

What progress has been made on the international review into the books included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

**Jack Lopresti:** [901103]

What progress has been made on the international review into the books included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

**James Cleverly:**

Following the UK's calls for international action, an EU sponsored independent review of Palestinian textbooks is currently underway. We understand that an interim report will be completed in Spring 2020 with the full report due later this year. The Development Secretary made it clear that incitement in education is unacceptable when she spoke with the PA Education Minister last week and she held him to account on progress to remove hateful content.

**Jason McCartney:** [901100]

What steps her Department is taking to protect the world's (a) forestry and (b) biodiversity.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[901104\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to protect the world's (a) forestry and (b) biodiversity.

**James Duddridge:**

DFID is at the forefront of global efforts to tackle illegal logging and promote sustainable trade in timber, and eliminate deforestation from supply chains. These programmes, and other assistance from the UK, are helping to preserve the world's most valuable habitats and address biodiversity loss.

## ■ **CDC: Fuel Oil**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[18887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many energy projects involving the burning of heavy fuel oil has CDC Group invested in since 2011; and (a) how much and (b) on what dates that funding was allocated to each of those projects.

**James Duddridge:**

Since 2011, CDC has invested in four energy projects designed to run on heavy fuel oil in four countries in Africa: Kenya, Cameroon, Mali and Guinea-Conakry. The funding was committed in 2015, 2017 and 2018. The total invested into the four projects is \$77.3 million which represents less than 1.5% of CDC's total investment portfolio.

CDC invests in energy projects to support access to energy for 600 million Africans without power and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 in a socially just manner. Over the past two years, CDC has committed over \$500 million to renewable energy projects, almost 25% of CDC's total investment commitments made over this period. Whenever CDC invests in fossil fuels, it does so with the aim to increase efficiency, reduce emissions and as part of a low carbon transition plan.

## ■ **Department for International Development: Departmental Responsibilities**

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[18446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government has consulted with charities on (a) the potential merits of merging her Department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and (b) the potential effect of merging those Departments on aid policy.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Prime Minister has appointed a fully joint junior ministerial team for DFID and the FCO. This builds on the good work DFID is already delivering with the FCO: in 32 bilateral posts, 16 multilateral missions and through the eight FCO-DFID Joint Units in London. The Prime Minister also appointed separate Secretaries of State for the Foreign Office and DFID in the recent reshuffle and is keen to make sure UK aid is both spent well and aligned with the UK's foreign policy priorities.

The Government Manifesto maintains spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA and pledges to end the preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children by 2030 and lead the way in eradicating Ebola and malaria. We will continue to need the support of our partner charities to deliver on these commitments.

### ■ Developing Countries: Climate Change

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[19899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to ensure that Official Development Assistance is not used for development that causes climate change.

**James Duddridge:**

The Government published the Green Finance Strategy in July 2019, which included our commitment to align all UK Official Development Assistance with the Paris Agreement. This reflected our commitment to put climate change at the heart of our development programmes. Our commitment to doubling our international climate finance to £11.6 billion over the years 21/22 to 25/26 means that we will be investing more UK aid in low carbon development such as clean energy, and assisting poorer countries to anticipate and manage the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

### ■ Developing Countries: Education

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[18764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 8427 on Developing Countries: Education, what estimate she has made of the proportion of adolescent girls out of school in emergencies.

**Wendy Morton:**

UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates that around 100 million girls of lower and upper secondary school age were out-of-school globally in 2019. Whilst the number of children living in emergencies has increased in the last decade, no reliable estimates currently exist for the proportion of adolescent girls who are out-of-school and affected by emergencies. DFID is supporting the UNESCO UIS and other partners to improve global data sources related to SDG4. In 2015, the Global Education Monitoring Report estimated that girls were two and a half times more likely to be out of school in conflict-affected countries.

Supporting delivery of SDG 4 by promoting 12 years of quality education for all children, especially girls, by 2030 is a top priority for the UK Government.

### ■ Developing Countries: Energy

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[20053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department plans to introduce targets for investment in low carbon energy sources throughout the world.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK is committed to unlocking affordable and clean energy for the poorest and contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7. UK Official Development Assistance increasingly supports renewable energy sources – between 2011-12 and 2018-19 UK aid has provided 26 million people with improved access to clean energy and avoided 16 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

The doubling of the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) contribution to £11.6 billion from 2021/22 to 2025/26 will ensure that the UK can do even more to support the most vulnerable people and countries and help accelerate the development and adoption of low carbon technologies.

The ICF increase includes up to £1 billion for the Ayrton Fund to go towards the development and testing of new technology in areas such as energy storage, new cooling technologies, next generation solar, and technologies for industrial decarbonisation.

**■ Developing Countries: HIV Infection****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[20414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding his Department allocated to programmes to tackle HIV/AIDS in 2018-19.

**Wendy Morton:**

In 2018, DFID spent £174.6 million multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) to tackle HIV/AIDS. Most DFID investments to the HIV response are now directed through multilateral organisations such as Unitaid, UNAIDS and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. In addition, in 2018, DFID spent £10 million bilateral ODA on programmes tackling sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

The UK has made a £1.4 billion pledge to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria for the 6th replenishment covering 2020 to 2022. This supports the commitment to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.

This data does not capture spend on related programming on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, including research and health systems strengthening.

DFID spend data is available on the Statistics on International Development website. Comparable figures beyond December 2018 are not yet available. Estimates for 2019 spending will be available in autumn 2020.

**■ Developing Countries: Microfinance****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[18717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of the finding from the World

Bank Group report entitled Profiting from Parity that Microcredit has only limited effects on business outcomes for women.

**James Duddridge:**

DFID continually reviews emerging evidence in order to ensure that its programmes maximise value for money for UK taxpayers. The “Profiting from Parity” report indicates that early studies on the impact of microcredit have found mixed results on income growth and consumption levels, including for women entrepreneurs. However, other research provides strong evidence that under particular circumstances, when products are suitably tailored for the specific needs of the borrower, microcredit can have a positive impact on development by enabling individuals to help themselves out of poverty. Responsible microfinance can help people build personal resilience against economic shocks, smooth their incomes over time, and explore business growth opportunities, as well as facilitating broader developmental outcomes, such as access to affordable and reliable water, electricity, healthcare and education. This is especially true for women, who typically access more microfinance than men. The UK is committed to supporting financial inclusion as a key enabler to achieving the SDGs, and particularly on tackling the persistent gender gap in access to finance which is crucial for building women’s economic empowerment.

■ **Developing Countries: Nutrition**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[19850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much Official Development Assistance her Department has allocated to Nutrition for Growth.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK has been a global leader on nutrition since hosting the first ever Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in 2013. We are making progress against our 2013 N4G commitments as follows:

- DFID has already exceeded its commitment to invest £2.13 billion from 2013 to 2020 in nutrition sensitive programmes – to date we have spent £2.7 billion on this type of programme;
- We have also unlocked the full amount of nutrition matched funding committed in 2013 – this has leveraged £560 million more for nutrition from other donors; and
- We are working to ensure we reach the target to invest £575 million on direct nutrition services by the end of this year.

DFID officials are working closely with the Government of Japan to prepare for the 2020 Nutrition for Growth Summit. This will be an important opportunity to secure new commitments to nutrition, to set the world on a better track to achieve the Global Goals and to help achieve our ambition of ending preventable deaths by 2030. We are considering what commitment the UK Government will make at the Summit.

## ■ Developing Countries: Older People

**Mr Jonathan Lord:**

[\[20055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to include older people and ageing populations within the work of her Department.

**Wendy Morton:**

My Department recognises that older people experience a range of complex barriers and face multiple exclusions in developing countries across the globe.

Ageing is an important part of DFID's efforts to ensure inclusion and our approach to leaving no one behind. For example, DFID's Disability Inclusion Strategy and Strategic Vision for Gender Equality take a life-course approach, ensuring the delivery of transformative change for people all ages.

We are also supporting governments to make vital social protection systems more inclusive of older people. In Uganda, DFID continues to build on its partnership with the Government of Uganda to deliver a Senior Citizen Grant. The grant currently supports over 168,000 older people to help meet their nutritional and healthcare needs.

## ■ Developing Countries: Plastics

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[19844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps are being taken by her Department to reduce the amount of single use plastics in developing countries.

**James Duddridge:**

DFID is funding a number of interventions to tackle plastic waste and single use plastics in developing countries.

To support the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance launched in London in April 2018, DFID is providing expertise to developing countries that signed up to meet the ambitions of the Alliance. This includes working towards eliminating single use plastics.

In addition, DFID is funding projects to increase recycling of plastic and improve waste management in Uganda, Ghana and Vanuatu. DFID is also funding innovative research and supports UK charities working on plastic recycling and waste management through the Small Charities Challenge Fund and UK Aid Match. This includes funding work through Tearfund and Waste Aid, in Haiti, Pakistan, Cameroon, The Gambia and Kenya which is focused on reducing waste and pollution.

## ■ Developing Countries: Poverty

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[21130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking to help to tackle global poverty through Fairtrade principles.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK government is committed to tackle global poverty through the Fairtrade principles of decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. These principles are included throughout our work and show that between 2015/16 and 2018/19 we have supported 3.9 million people to raise their incomes or obtain or maintain better jobs or livelihoods.

The UK government has also been a strong supporter of the Fairtrade Foundation. DFID provided £20 million to Fairtrade International between 2010 and 2016 to make the global Fairtrade system stronger, including activities to improve traceability and transparent reporting within Fairtrade tea, coffee and cocoa supply chains. DFID also supported Fairtrade through the £30.3 million Responsible Accountable and Transparent Enterprise programme, funding Fairtrade to help them develop Fairtrace, a supply chain mapping tool. The UK government continues to be a vocal champion of their work.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[22023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to his written statement on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy HCWS126, if he will include in that review a commitment to help end extreme poverty around the world.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Integrated Review will be a wholesale reassessment of the UK's foreign, defence, security and development policy. The specific inclusion of development as part of the review demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the UK's development, security and foreign policies are complementary.

The Review will be underpinned by the commitment the Government has already made to spend 0.7% of GNI to international development. The Government is committed to the 0.7% target and to continuing to use our aid budget to fight disease, support people living through conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, and help girls all round the world get a quality education.

**■ Developing Countries: Vaccination****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[19849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will use the UK's role as host of the Gavi Replenishment Conference to help ensure that the global vaccine agenda prioritises deprived and marginalised children.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is delighted to be hosting the Gavi replenishment at the Global Vaccine Summit in June 2020. Gavi has immunised over 760 million children, saving 13 million lives from preventable diseases. The UK is proud to have played a significant role in delivering these extraordinary results.

Children born to the poorest families, with the lowest levels of education, and living in the hardest to reach areas are the least likely to get vaccinations. Our priority as hosts of the Global Vaccine Summit 2020 will be to help Gavi secure the funding it needs to further deliver its life-saving work. As part of our influencing efforts, the UK will press for new strategies to address the poverty barriers and identify those children who miss out on life-saving vaccines. This includes promoting equitable coverage of immunisation to leave no-one behind and ensure vaccines are available for the most vulnerable. Leaving no child behind is integral to delivering on our manifesto commitment to ending preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children in developing countries by 2030.

#### ■ **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: Finance**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[19848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will increase the level of Official Development Assistance allocated to Gavi, the Vaccines Alliance.

**Wendy Morton:**

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's work is critical to the delivery of the UK's objective to end preventable deaths, having helped save 13 million lives since its inception in 2000. The UK remains deeply committed to supporting this vital work, including through the provision of significant funding to Gavi and hosting the Gavi replenishment at the Global Vaccine Summit 2020 in June.

#### ■ **Montserrat: Airports and Ports**

**Scott Benton:**

[\[20643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to support the development of (a) an airport and (b) port infrastructure in Montserrat to assist that country's economic growth.

**Wendy Morton:**

DFID is investing in infrastructure on the island of Montserrat to promote economic growth and build resilience to natural disasters. This includes resurfacing the runway at the John Osborne airport. This action is necessary to prevent the airport from being closed by the regulator, thereby cutting off a key source of access to and from the island.

DFID is also providing support through the UK Caribbean Infrastructure Fund (UK CIF) managed by the Caribbean Development Bank for improved port facilities in Montserrat. Procurement is underway for the design and build of a new jetty and associated works.

**■ Sudan: Visits Abroad****Harriett Baldwin:** [\[21253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she has plans to visit Sudan.

**James Duddridge:**

There are currently no plans for a Secretary of State for International Development visit to Sudan. However, as Minister for Africa, I am considering plans to travel to the continent, including to Sudan, in the near future.

**■ UK-Africa Investment Summit****Caroline Lucas:** [\[21967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many deals were agreed at the UK Africa Investment Summit 2020; and in which sectors those deals were agreed.

**James Duddridge:**

Twenty-seven commercial deals with a total value of over £6.5 billion were announced at the UK-Africa Investment Summit. These deals covered a range of sectors including healthcare, infrastructure, and energy. A full summary of all the deals announced on the day of the Summit can be found on the UK-Africa Investment Summit website and will soon be available in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Department for International Trade: Flags****Philip Davies:** [\[21199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags her Department owns.

**Conor Burns:**

The department owns 8 flags which are flown externally. These are: 4 Union Flags, 2 St George's Flags, 1 Scottish Saltire Flag and 1 Flag of Wales. This list does not include free standing flags in Ministerial offices.

**Philip Davies:** [\[21942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of her Department in London in each year since 2015.

**Conor Burns:**

Records of flag flying are held by our facilities management provider. Records prior to 2018 are not held.

The Union Jack is flown all year round unless replaced with the flag of St. George.

The flag of St. George was flown 3 times in 2018, 5 times in 2019 and has not yet been flown in 2020.

The Scottish Saltire Flag or Welsh Flag were not flown in the period for which records are held.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Family Proceedings

**Louise Haigh:** [\[21358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to his oral Answer of 25 February 2020, Official Report, column 176, what the outcome was of his meeting of 26 February 2020 with the President of the Family Division.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Lord Chancellor had a constructive discussion with the President of the Family Division about their shared desire to ensure that vulnerable parties are given the right support through the family court process.

Our expert panel on harm in the family courts is actively considering these issues. The panel is finalising its report and will publish findings and recommendations for next steps this Spring.

### ■ Legal Aid Agency: Complaints

**Steve McCabe:** [\[22352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the proportion of enquiries made by Members of Parliament to the Legal Aid Agency that receive a response within 20 working days.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[22353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of complaints made to the Legal Aid Agency that involve a statutory charge on an individuals property in each of the last 10 years.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[22354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time is for the Legal Aid Agency to resolve a complaint.

**Steve McCabe:** [\[22355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many complaints have been made to the Legal Aid Agency on not implementing a court order, in each year since 2009.

**Alex Chalk:**

For the most recent completed financial year, 98% of enquiries made by Members of Parliament to the Legal Aid Agency received a response within 20 working days.

Information for the remaining questions posed could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: Third Sector

**Robert Halfon:** [\[20457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much funding she has allocated to civil society and campaigning bodies in each of the last three years.

**Alex Chalk:**

Civil Society forms an essential part of our communities up and down the country. It includes large, national charities, social enterprises, volunteers and small grassroots organisations but what joins them all is the idea of creating social value to help build a better society.

Government funding to civil society is ring-fenced for particular projects or programmes. Grant agreement terms and conditions prohibit grant funding being used for paid for lobbying and political campaigning.

The Cabinet Office publishes grants data on [www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-grants-register](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-grants-register) for all departments. Within that data, the Ministry of Justice grant schemes that may relate to civil society funding are identifiable. We do not pay grants for campaigning activities.

The data for 2016/17 and 2017/18 has already been published and it is expected that the data relating to 2018/19 will be published by end of March 2020 as part of the Cabinet Office transparency agenda.

## ■ Sentencing

**Gareth Johnson:** [\[21242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) reports and (b) referrals were received by the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office in respect of poor sentencing by lay magistrates in each of the last five years.

**Gareth Johnson:** [\[21243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) reports and (b) referrals were received by the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office in respect of poor decision-making by lay magistrates in each of the last five years.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Judicial Conduct Investigations Office's (JCIO) statutory remit is to deal with complaints of judicial misconduct.

Judicial decisions, including sentencing decisions, fall outside the scope of the judicial disciplinary system as they can be only challenged through the courts. There have therefore been no referrals to the JCIO about poor sentencing or poor decision making by lay magistrates.

## ■ Suicide: Gambling

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[21261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to require coroners to record an opinion as to gambling addiction and other relevant factors in cases of death by suicide.

**Alex Chalk:**

Expecting coroners to assess the motivation for individual suicides in all cases would take the coroner's role fundamentally beyond its legal parameters. The coroner's role and, in particular, what they are required to ascertain and determine is a matter of both statute and case law and cannot be extended administratively. Any legislative change would have to be considered very carefully.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Northern Ireland Office: Third Sector

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[20458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much funding he has allocated to civil society and campaigning bodies in each of the last three years.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

My Department is committed to supporting positive initiatives through the involvement of civil society in Northern Ireland and the funding of a small number of public bodies that work with a wide range of cross-community organisations. Details of the Department's expenditure is published in the Northern Ireland Office's annual report and accounts.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Scotland Office: Flags

**Philip Davies:**

[\[21194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many (a) Union Jack, (b) St George, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) Flag of Wales flags his Department owns.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland owns 8 Saltires and 6 Union flags.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[21937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Union flag and the Saltire are flown every day from the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland's building in London. Exceptions are sometimes made at the direction of the Ceremonials Team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport - for example, the Armed Forces flag is flown on Armed Forces Day.

**■ Scotland Office: Third Sector****Robert Halfon:**[\[20459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much funding he has allocated to civil society and campaigning bodies in each of the last three years.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland has not allocated any funding to civil society and campaigning bodies in any of the last three years.

**TRANSPORT****■ Aviation: Noise****Caroline Lucas:**[\[20435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to protect (a) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (b) other designated areas from increases in noise pollution as a result of aviation expansion; and if he will make a statement.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The airspace issues surrounding National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) were considered in the department's airspace and noise project. The outcome of this work was reflected in the Air Navigation Guidance 2017, which the department issued to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in October 2017.

The guidance requires the CAA to have regard to the statutory purposes of National Parks and AONB when considering proposals for airspace changes. When airspace changes are being considered, it is important that local circumstances, including community views on specific areas that should be avoided, are taken into account where possible. However, given the finite amount of airspace available, it will not always be possible to avoid overflying National Parks or AONB.

**Caroline Lucas:**[\[20436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to adopt the World Health Organisation noise threshold levels (a) for monitoring and reporting on noise pollution from aviation and (b) as a statutory requirement to be met by all airport operators; and if he will make a statement.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Following the 2018 publication of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region, the Government convened

the Defra-led Interdepartmental Group on Costs and Benefits Noise Subject Group. This group is reviewing the evidence underpinning the WHO's guidelines, together with more recent evidence and it will consider whether there are any necessary updates to relevant government guidance.

## ■ Biofuels

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[21159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the use of E10 fuel on older vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Increasing the share of bioethanol in petrol by blending up to 10 per cent, known as E10, could provide significant carbon savings, helping us meet our climate change commitments. One of the main barriers to introducing E10 has been vehicle compatibility. Currently, around 95% of petrol cars used in the UK can use E10, but around 700,000 are not warranted by their manufacturers to use E10. This number is expected to decrease as vehicles come to the end of their life. However, some classic and cherished vehicles that are not advised to use E10 will remain in use.

The prolonged use of E10 fuel in those older and classic vehicles not under manufacturer warranty can cause corrosion of some rubbers and alloys used in the engine and fuel systems. For those vehicles, the Department remains committed to ensuring that E5 is retained as a protection grade, if E10 is introduced.

## ■ Bypasses: Ipswich

**Tom Hunt:**

[\[20576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will remove the requirement that 10 to 15,000 homes be provided in addition to the homes contained within the Suffolk local plans in order for funding to be allocated for the proposed Ipswich Northern Bypass.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

I understand the Cabinet of Suffolk County Council has taken the decision to cease development of the proposed Ipswich Northern Bypass scheme, removing it from consideration for funding as part of the Major Road Network and Large Local Majors Programme. Should this remain a priority and development of the scheme resumes, there will be further opportunities for funding.

However, local planning and housing decisions are outside of the Department's purview and it is not the Department's policy to specify planning requirements for road schemes to be funded. The Department would simply require a local financial contribution to this scheme.

## ■ Electric Scooters

**Scott Mann:**

[20559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on the use of electric scooters on public highways; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including e-scooters in the cycle to work scheme run by HMRC.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department is considering the use of electric scooters closely and recognises that people want to take advantage of the opportunities personal vehicles can offer. The Department is committed to encouraging innovation in transport as well as improving road safety, but new modes of transport must be safe and secure by design.

The Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy, published on 19 March 2019 includes a Regulatory Review which will address the challenges of ensuring our transport infrastructure and regulation are fit for the future.

The Strategy can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-mobility-urban-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-mobility-urban-strategy)

The Department will use the Regulatory Review to examine current legislation and determine from the evidence what is needed to make the necessary changes for a safe and healthy future. One strand of this will look at options for enabling micromobility devices, and a consultation will be issued in due course and when we have considered the consultation responses we will consider the legislative steps needed.

One of the principles of the Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy is that cycling and walking should remain the best options for short journeys and we remain committed to that. The Department has no plans to include e-scooters in the Cycle to Work Scheme. The Cycle to Work Scheme is an employee tax-benefit scheme that enables employees to hire cycles and cycle safety equipment for active travel to work from their employer, or from a third party, in return for a deduction from their earnings via salary sacrifice.

## ■ Heathrow Airport: Construction

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[22367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the judgment in relation to R (Friends of the Earth) v Secretary of State for Transport and others on the sustainability of the Heathrow Logistics Hubs initiative.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Last week the Court of Appeal ruled that the designation of the Airports National Policy Statement did not take account of the Paris Agreement, non-CO2 emissions or emissions post 2050, and therefore has no legal effect unless and until the Government carries out a review under the Planning Act 2008.

The Government has taken the decision not to appeal the Court's judgment. We take seriously our commitments on the environment and reducing carbon emissions.

This is a complex and important judgment which the Government will need time to consider carefully.

The Government will not comment on an ongoing legal case.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

**Paul Maynard:**

[21213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many recognised ancient and veteran trees are scheduled to be removed during (a) Phase 1, (b) Phase 2a and (c) Phase 2b of the High Speed 2 project.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

To date we have identified 35 trees exhibiting veteran or ancient tree features that would need to be removed for Phase One.

The Phase 2a Environmental Statement (as amended) reports the loss of 38 known ancient or veteran trees on a precautionary basis.

The Environmental Impact Assessment has not yet been completed for Phase 2b, so we are unable to provide numbers of trees.

Approximately 0.39 square kilometres of ancient woodland will be lost between London and Crewe (Phase One and Phase 2a). HS2 Ltd aim to plant over 7 million new trees and shrubs along the line of Phase 1, including over 40 native species.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Chilterns

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

[22346]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the extent of the (a) damage and (b) pollution of the chalk aquifers in the Chilterns as a result of the tunnelling activity of HS2 Ltd.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Environmental Statement for Phase One of HS2 reports the results of the environmental impact assessment. This includes the effects on water resources, which are reported in volume 5: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-one-environmental-statement-volume-5-water-resources>

HS2 Ltd, which is responsible for the safe construction of HS2, has been working closely with experts from the Environment Agency and Affinity Water for a number of years to ensure that HS2 construction work does not cause contamination of the chalk aquifer, or in any way affect the ongoing provision of high quality drinking water from it .

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[22347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with representatives of the Environment Agency on the risk of (a) damage and (b) pollution of the chalk aquifers in the Chilterns as a result of tunnelling activity by HS2 Ltd.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

As the new dedicated Minister of State for HS2, I will hold discussions with governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in or affected by HS2 construction and delivery as necessary. HS2 Ltd, which is responsible for the safe construction of HS2, has been working closely with experts from the Environment Agency and Affinity Water for a number of years to ensure that HS2 construction work does not cause contamination of the chalk aquifer, or in any way affect the ongoing provision of high quality drinking water from it.

**■ Parking Offences: Pedestrian Areas****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[20616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to tackle the practice of pavement parking.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Department for Transport has considered the findings of our internal review, as well as the Transport Select Committee report into pavement parking. We will shortly be setting out our proposed way forward in our response to the Transport Select Committee.

**■ Ports: Scotland****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[21362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 2016, what funds (a) have been or (b) will be provided to the Scottish Government from the Ports Infrastructure and Connectivity and Resilience Fund as a (i) direct or (ii) consequential payment.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government announced on the 30 August 2019 £30m worth of funding for upgrades to port infrastructure, road and rail links and to build resilience within local government, which included the £10m Ports Infrastructure and Connectivity and Resilience Fund. This funding was related to English ports and Local Resilience Forums only.

As with all funding of this nature the Devolved Administrations received consequential allocations based on the Barnett formula directly related to the amount allocated to this port infrastructure funding package. The amount allocated to Scotland was £2.9m.

## ■ Road Traffic: South Yorkshire

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[20645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of car journeys that start in Rother Valley constituency compared to those journeys that start (a) south Yorkshire and (b) Sheffield City region; and what steps he is taking to help reduce the number of those journeys by improving public transport in that constituency.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Department produces estimates of where trips begin and end for the purpose of forecasting travel for use in specific transport modelling applications. The estimates are based on national data sources such as people's propensity to travel from the National Travel Survey and where they may live from ONS population projections. This helps inform bespoke models used in individual scheme appraisals by providing an initial estimate of demand, which the more specific models refine in light of more local data. This data set is publicly available here <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/national-trip-end-model-nem> and associated software and guidance for its specific use is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tempro-downloads>.

The Government is committed to improving public transport. The Transforming Cities Fund is providing £2.5 billion to support public and sustainable transport within city regions, promote local growth, reduce carbon emissions, tackle air quality, and increase housing. £1.28 billion will be allocated via a process of co-development with 12 shortlisted cities, which includes Sheffield City Region. Decisions on the funding to be awarded to the shortlisted cities will be announced shortly.

In addition, the Government has recently announced plans to invest £5 billion to overhaul bus and cycle links across England. This is on top of the £220 million of funding announced last year to revitalise bus use across the UK by supporting electric buses and demand responsive transport schemes, establish new Superbus networks and enable local authorities to improve current or restore lost services.

## ■ Southern: Standards

**Elliot Colburn:**

[\[20584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Southern Rail's performance in 2019.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

From February 2019 to February 2020 for Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), the operator of Southern services, the Moving Annual Average Passenger Performance Measure (PPM), which measures trains arriving at their destination within 5 minutes of their scheduled arrival time, was 85.2%. This is a 3.1 point improvement on the previous year. Southern is the best performing of GTR's brands with a PPM figure of 86.1% for the most recent four-week period. There is still room for improvement and the Government is committed to investing around £48 billion in maintaining and upgrading the rail network in the period from 2019 to 2024, focused on increasing reliability and punctuality for passengers.

**Elliot Colburn:** [\[20585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the punctuality of Southern Rail services (a) calling at and (b) departing from (i) Wallington, (ii) Hackbridge, (iii) Carshalton and (iv) Carshalton Beeches railway stations in 2019.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

For these stations, the annual averages for trains calling within one minute of the scheduled time are: 74.0% of services at Wallington, 70.0% of services at Hackbridge, 86.6% of services at Carshalton and 78.1% of services at Carshalton Beeches. The Department monitors each train operator's overall performance against its performance benchmarks (cancellations, delay minutes and capacity) regularly and there are clear actions set out in the franchise agreement should performance drop below what is expected.

**Elliot Colburn:** [\[20586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the passenger capacity of Southern Rail services (a) calling at and (b) departing from (i) Wallington, (ii) Hackbridge, (iii) Carshalton and (iv) Carshalton Beeches railway stations in 2019.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department monitors each train operator's overall performance against its performance benchmarks, and this includes the capacity regime, which measures the number of short formations during the peaks. Govia Thameslink Railway is currently meeting the required levels. However should it fail to do so there are clear actions set out in the franchise agreement in order to remedy any underperformance.

**Elliot Colburn:** [\[20587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage Southern Rail to improve the (a) punctuality and (b) passenger capacity of services (i) calling at and (ii) departing from (A) Wallington, (B) Hackbridge, (C) Carshalton and (D) Carshalton Beeches railway stations.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department monitors each train operator's overall performance against its performance benchmarks (cancellations, delay minutes and capacity) regularly and there are clear actions set out in the franchise agreement should performance drop below what is expected. The Department is committed to working with Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) in driving punctuality higher and, in partnership with Network Rail and other industry partners, GTR is focused on continuous improvement through the joint On Time Railway initiative.

## ■ Transport: North of England

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[20644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average number of daily journeys by each mode of transport from (a) Dinnington, (b) North

Anston, (c) South Anston, (d) Laughton, (e) Maltby and (f) Thurcroft to (i) Rotherham, (ii) Sheffield, (iii) Doncaster and (iv) Worksop.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Department produces estimates of where trips begin and end for the purpose of forecasting travel for use in specific transport modelling applications. The estimates are based on national data sources such as people's propensity to travel from the National Travel Survey and where they may live from ONS population projections. This helps inform bespoke models used in individual scheme appraisals by providing an initial estimate of demand, which the more specific models refine in light of more local data. This data set is publicly available here <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/national-trip-end-model-ntem> and associated guidance for its specific use can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tag-unit-m4-forecasting-and-uncertainty>. Other available information for journeys at some of the locations has been provided below for each mode, though this includes all journeys made at specified locations and does not specify the start and end points. This information has been selected from a variety of statistical sources and as a result there are differences in time periods and geographies.

*Journeys made by rail*

The ORR produce annual Estimates of Station Usage for each mainline railway station on Great Britain's rail network. This publication gives the total number of entries and exits at each station over an annual period, which has been provided in the table below as a daily average for 2018/19 financial year, at the listed locations which have a train station:

| STATION NAME          | ENTRIES AND EXITS (DAILY AVERAGE) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (i) Rotherham Central | 1,554                             |
| (ii) Sheffield        | 27,144                            |
| (iii) Doncaster       | 10,734                            |
| (iv) Worksop          | 1,207                             |

*Journeys made by all road vehicles*

The Department publishes the motor vehicle flow by local authority, which provides the number of motor vehicles passing in 24 hours at an average point on the road network in each local authority.

| LOCAL AUTHORITY | 2018 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY FLOW* (NUMBER OF VEHICLES) |
|-----------------|--|
| Doncaster       | 5,602  |
| Rotherham       | 5,499  |

| LOCAL AUTHORITY | 2018 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY FLOW* (NUMBER OF VEHICLES) |
|-----------------|--|
| Sheffield       | 3,765  |
| Nottinghamshire | 4,187  |

\* The number of motor vehicles passing in 24 hours at an average point on the road network in each local authority.

This information is taken from the Road Traffic Estimates in Great Britain 2018 publication, table TRA8907 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-traffic-estimates-in-great-britain-2018>)

#### *Journeys made by tram*

There were 48.1 million passenger journeys on the Sheffield Supertram in 2018/19. The journeys on the Sheffield Supertram cross several constituencies, but the Department only holds data on the total number of journeys for the entire system per year.

#### *Journeys made by bus*

The number of passenger journeys on buses in South Yorkshire PTE was 91.3m in 2018/19. Further information on bus use in other areas is unavailable.

#### *Journeys made by air*

The Department does not hold data for air journeys in these areas.

#### *Journeys made by taxis*

The Department does not hold daily journey data at an area level.

#### *Journeys made by walking*

The Department does not hold daily journey data at an area level.

#### *Journeys made by cycling*

The Department does not hold daily journey data at an area level.

## TREASURY

### ■ Alcoholic Drinks: Excise Duties

Neil Coyle:

[\[20502\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake a review of alcohol duty and postpone changes to excise duty collection arrangements for post duty point dilution until the results of that review are available.

**Jesse Norman:**

As committed to in the manifesto, the Government will undertake a review of alcohol duties. Further announcements will be made in due course.

However, there are no plans to postpone the prohibitive actions against post duty point dilution for wine. UK drinks manufacturers have been given over 18 months' notice to adapt their business models. The Treasury does keep all taxes under review, including their impact on drink manufacturers.

**Child Benefit****Alberto Costa:**[\[20540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to review the income threshold for child benefit eligibility.

**Jesse Norman:**

Child Benefit remains a universal benefit. However, the Government introduced the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) from January 2013 to ensure that support is targeted at those who need it most. It applies to anyone with an individual income over £50,000, who claims Child Benefit or whose partner claims it. The charge increases gradually for taxpayers with incomes between £50,000 and £60,000.

The Government believes that these are currently the right levels for the HICBC thresholds, but as with all elements of tax policy this remains under review.

**Divers: Tax Allowances****Alex Cunningham:**[\[20482\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) publish and (b) take steps to review the items against which self-employed commercial divers can claim tax relief.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC do not publish guidance on specific items that can be claimed as deductions for self-employed commercial divers; nor are there plans to publish such guidance. HMRC's Business Income Manual, available on GOV.UK, explains the general rules for allowing deductions to help people decide whether their particular expenses qualify for deduction or not. GOV.UK also gives advice to the self-employed on common expenses types that are claimed and on how to claim simplified expenses at fixed rates.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[20483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent representations he has received on HMRC guidance to self-employed commercial divers on claiming tax relief when working in the offshore energy sector.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC have been approached by a representative body asking for a review of the guidance on the requirements under Section 15 of Income Tax Trading and Other Income Act 2015. This legislation provides that the income of divers and diving

supervisors employed on seabed diving activities should be treated for income tax purposes as the carrying on of a trade.

### ■ Employment: Taxation

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[20641\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the off-payroll review has concluded; and when the outcome of that review will be published.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government launched a review of reform to the off-payroll working rules on 7 January 2020 to determine if there were further steps that could be taken to ensure the smooth and successful implementation of the reform, which will come into force in April 2020.

The review of the off-payroll working reform has now concluded and the outcome of the review was published on 27 February 2020.

### ■ Free Zones

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[22011\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress the Government has made on establishing free ports since the UK left the EU.

**Steve Barclay:**

We are engaging with industry experts and economists to ensure we make Freeports a success, by developing an extremely ambitious and attractive offer for businesses interested in investing in Freeports. As the next step in this agenda, a public consultation on Freeports policy was launched on 10th February, which will last for ten weeks. We will take on board suggestions and feedback from stakeholders and the public during this consultation and make further announcements in due course.

### ■ Free Zones: Job Creation

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[22012\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of (a) the potential number of jobs created by freeports and (b) how many of those jobs will be transferred from elsewhere in the UK.

**Steve Barclay:**

We are engaging with industry experts, economists and the public to ensure we make Freeports a success, by developing an extremely ambitious and attractive offer for businesses interested in investing in Freeports. We believe Freeports will play a significant role in boosting trade, attracting inward investment and driving productive activity across the UK. This will level up communities across the country through increased employment opportunities. We launched a consultation on the 10 February, which will run for 10 weeks. We will take on board suggestions and

feedback from stakeholders and the public during this consultation and make further announcements in due course.

## ■ Free Zones: Money Laundering and Tax Evasion

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[22013\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the correlation between the operation of freeports and (a) tax evasion and (b) money laundering.

**Steve Barclay:**

The UK plays a key role in tackling cross-border illegal activity and this is not going to change. UK Freeports will be innovative hubs that boost trade, attract inward investment and drive productive activity across the UK. HMRC have been closely involved in their design to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of tax towards funding our vital public services, while boosting growth in all regions of the UK.

## ■ Fuels: Excise Duties

**Robert Halfon:** [\[20453\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to freeze fuel duty.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises that transport is a significant cost for households and businesses, and at Budget 2018 the main rate of fuel duty was frozen for the ninth successive year, saving the average car driver £1000 since the freeze.

The Government keeps all taxes under review and changes are announced at fiscal events.

## ■ Infrastructure

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[22368\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to review the effectiveness of the UK Guarantees Scheme for infrastructure investment across the UK.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Infrastructure Finance Review was launched at the Spring Statement 2019 and consulted on how the Government can best support private investment in infrastructure. This included consulting on the Government's existing financial tools, such as the UK Guarantees Scheme. The review will conclude later this year. The UK Guarantees Scheme remains open across the UK and has so far supported over £4 billion worth of investment.

## ■ Non-domestic Rates

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[20536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on the scope of the forthcoming review of business rates; and if he will ensure that the review assesses the potential merits of solutions from across the business tax system.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** [\[20537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the scope is of the forthcoming review of business rates; and what plans he has for consulting industry during that review.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has committed to a fundamental review of business rates and will set out further details in due course, including how interested groups and individuals can engage with and contribute to the review.

## ■ Productivity

**Scott Mann:** [\[20527\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons the UK is ranked fifth in the comparative productivity levels of G7 countries; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the levels of productivity in rural and urban communities in the UK are equal.

**Steve Barclay:**

We recognise that UK productivity is lower than some of our peers. But we must also recognise that we have a number of strengths that we should continue to build on. We are the world's fifth largest economy. We have many of the best universities on earth, are one of the most attractive places in the world to do business and lead in many 21st-century technologies and innovations. Closing our productivity gap, which exists compared to other nations but also between regions in the UK, will be vital in unleashing the UK's potential.

We are committed to levelling up opportunity across all places in the UK. This means making sure that prosperity is shared across all our towns and cities. So far, we have announced a £5bn package of investment for buses and cycling, opened up a consultation on Freeports, and we've confirmed that we will proceed with HS2 to deliver essential North-South connectivity, greater capacity, and shorter journey times.

## ■ Spirits: Excise Duties

**Neil Coyle:** [\[20501\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if the Government will take steps to reduce excise duty on UK spirits.

**Jesse Norman:**

All taxes are kept under review, and any changes to tax will be announced through the Budget process.

**■ Tax Avoidance****Neil Coyle:**[\[20499\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allocate resources to HMRC in the forthcoming Budget to help ensure that people who promoted the Loan Charge scheme are held accountable.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is determined to continue to tackle promoters of tax avoidance schemes, including disguised remuneration schemes. HMRC are on track to deliver the Government's commitment to double the resources dedicated to tackling promoters by the end of 2019-20.

In the response to the Loan Charge review, the Government announced a package of measures to reduce the scope for promoters to market tax avoidance schemes. HMRC have committed to publishing a revised strategy for tackling promoters of tax avoidance schemes by the end of March 2020.

**■ Wines: Excise Duties****Neil Coyle:**[\[20500\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the HMRC Alcohol Duty Statistics (October 2019), what assessment he has made of the effect of the increase in duty on wine in 2019 Budget on duty receipts from wine.

**Jesse Norman:**

Announced at Budget 2018, Wine Duty rates on 'wine of fresh grape' and 'made-wine' at or below 22% Alcohol by Volume (ABV) increased by Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation from 1 February 2019.

Between February 2019 and January 2020, HMRC received £4,406 million from Wine Duty; an increase of £94.9 million (2.2%) compared to February 2018 to January 2019. The latest Wine Duty receipts are published in 'HMRC tax receipts and National Insurance contributions for the UK':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmrc-tax-and-nics-receipts-for-the-uk>.

HMRC do not receive information on brands, prices and volumes and are therefore unable to disaggregate how much of this increase is linked to the 1 February 2019 RPI rate rise compared to other wine market changes.

## WALES

### ■ Wales Office: Flags

**Philip Davies:** [\[21946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many times the (a) Union Jack, (b) St George's flag, (c) Scottish Saltire and (d) flag of Wales has been flown from the headquarters of his Department in London in each year since 2015.

**David T C Davies:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has flown the four flags from its London building on the following number of days each year since 2015:

| YEAR | NUMBER OF DAYS |           |                  |               |
|------|----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
|      | Union Jack     | St George | Scottish Saltire | Flag of Wales |
| 2016 | 365            | 0         | 0                | 360           |
| 2017 | 365            | 0         | 0                | 358           |
| 2018 | 361            | 5         | 0                | 347           |
| 2019 | 365            | 0         | 0                | 347           |

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Local Housing Allowance: Blackpool

**Paul Maynard:** [\[20432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much was paid in local housing allowance in the Blackpool local authority area in financial year 2018-19.

**Will Quince:**

Local Housing Allowance is used to calculate the maximum amount of Housing Benefit payable to claimants.

In 2018/19 the amount paid under the Local Housing Allowance Scheme for Housing Benefit claimants in the Blackpool local authority area was £51 million. This excludes the equivalent paid out in Local Housing Allowance for Universal Credit claimants, which is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

### ■ Motability

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[23562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Motability Scheme, what contracts the Government holds with (a) British Car Auctions and (b) other

car auctioneer organisations on the disposal of motability vehicles once the lease has expired.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Government holds no contracts with British Car Auctions or other car auctioneer organisations. The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability scheme. Motability Operations is independent commercial FCA regulated company responsible for the operational delivery of the scheme. Motability Operations is accountable to the Motability charity. With this in mind, any questions relating to the operation of the scheme itself should be directed to Motability. You can contact them at the following address:

Chief Executive of Motability, Motability, Warwick House, Roydon Road, Harlow, Essex, CM19 5PX.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[23563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether an individual private buyer can purchase a second hand motability vehicle direct from Motability.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the disability benefits that provide a passport to the Motability scheme. While the Department works closely with Motability, it is an independent charitable organisation that is wholly responsible for overseeing the terms and the administration of the scheme. With this in mind, any questions should be directed to Motability. You can contact them at the following address:

Chief Executive of Motability, Motability, Warwick House, Roydon Road, Harlow, Essex, CM19 5PX.

■ **Universal Credit**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[22382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average cost to her Department is of processing a universal credit claim for a single one month assessment period.

**Will Quince:**

The information is not held.