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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

#### ■ Batteries: Shortages

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[62653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of potential retail shortages of household batteries overwinter 2021-22; and what discussions he has had with suppliers and retailers on those shortages.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[62656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of potential retail shortages of household cleaning products over winter 2021-22; and what discussions he has had with suppliers and retailers on those potential shortages.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government recognises that as the global economy has rebounded from the pandemic, we have seen pressures placed on supply chains across sectors. We have taken quick and decisive action to ease these pressures where required including establishing a Supply Chain Advisory Group and Industry Taskforce, which provides a link between business and government to identify causes of supply chain issues and pre-empt future issues. Industry attendees are drawn from a range of sectors including the British Retail Consortium. Additionally, the Department engages at both Ministerial and official level on a range of issues affecting the retail sector including the availability of goods.

The causes of goods shortages can arise from a complex variety of reasons including stockpiling by consumers. Products generally remain in good supply. Retailers have highly resilient supply chains, as evidenced throughout the pandemic, and we have established ways of working with industry.

#### ■ Carbon Dioxide: Shortages

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[62655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of potential shortages of carbon dioxide over winter 2021-22; and what discussions he has had with suppliers and industrial users on those potential shortages.

**Lee Rowley:**

Carbon dioxide is an essential component of our national economy. Carbon dioxide suppliers have agreed to pay CF Fertilisers a price for the carbon dioxide that it produces, which will enable the company to continue operating while global gas prices remain high, and therefore will ensure that UK businesses have access to a



sustainable supply of carbon dioxide. The Government continues to monitor market developments and is examining the options for the market to improve resilience in the provision of essential supplies - such as carbon dioxide - in the longer term.

Throughout summer 2021, and during the most recent disruption to the domestic supply of carbon dioxide, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has been engaging with industries across the food supply chain, including pigs and poultry processors, as well as food and drinks manufacturers. Through this engagement, we are able to monitor the industry mitigations needed and can collect evidence to inform policy recommendations, as well as deepening our understanding of sectors' readiness for the winter.

Devolved Administrations have also been consulted to monitor the effects of the disruptions and assess the preparedness of the industry for the winter months.

## ■ Electricity Generation: Fees and Charges

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[59972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Transmission Network Use of System charges on the (a) investment and (b) operational decisions made by companies on the location of offshore renewable energy projects.

**Greg Hands:**

Transmission charging is a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator, and it published a call for evidence on 1 October 2021 on possible transmission charging reforms. The Department is engaging closely as Ofgem progresses this work, to understand the implications of any decisions for different users, including offshore renewable energy projects.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[59973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the projected average zonal tariff across charging zones arising from Transmission Network Use of System charges in (a) Scotland, (b) England and (c) Wales is in each year from (i) 2021 to (ii) 2024.

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[59974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average zonal tariff across charging zones arising from Transmission Network Use of System charges is in (a) Scotland, (b) England and (c) Wales for each year since 2016.

**Greg Hands:**

National Grid Electricity System Operator publishes a report setting out a five year forecast of the tariff by geographic charging zone arising from Transmission Network Use of System charges, the latest version of which is available at:

<https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/191116/download>. This covers the period 2022/23 to 2026/27.

It publishes a report setting out final tariffs for each year, usually in the January preceding the start of a charging year in April. These reports are available at: <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/industry-information/charging/transmission-network-use-system-tnuos-charges>.

## ■ Electricity Generation: Scotland

**Kenny MacAskill:** [59971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent representations his Department has received from the Scottish Government on Transmission Network Use of System charges.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS Ministers and officials are in regular contact with colleagues in the Scottish Government on a range of energy related matters, including transmission charges.

## ■ Electricity: Fees and Charges

**Neale Hanvey:** [61226]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will undertake a review of the Transmission Network Use of System charges.

**Greg Hands:**

Transmission charging is a matter for Ofgem as the independent regulator, and it published a call for evidence on 1 October 2021 on possible transmission charging reforms. The call for evidence is available at:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/tnuos-reform-call-evidence>. BEIS is engaging with Ofgem as it progresses this work.

## ■ Fossil Fuels: Capital Investment

**Catherine West:** [59907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking in response to the recommendation of the International Energy Agency that there should be no new investments in oil and gas production fields, coal mines or unabated coal power plants beyond 2021.

**Greg Hands:**

While the Government is working to drive down dependency for oil and gas, there will continue to be ongoing demand over the coming years, as recognised by the independent Climate Change Committee. Given the maturity of the UK Continental Shelf, even with continued development, the UK is projected to remain a net importer out to 2050.

## ■ Heat Pumps: Low Incomes

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[59896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing low-income households with subsidised heat pumps in order to (a) protect poorer households in the run up to winter and (b) kickstart the low-carbon heating market.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government has published its comprehensive Heat and Buildings Strategy, with major new plans to lower the cost of low-carbon heating technology, like heat pumps, to ensure they are no more expensive to buy and run than fossil-fuel boilers. The strategy aims to promote growth and levelling up through supporting 175,000 green skilled jobs by 2030 and 240,000 by 2035.

New grants of £5,000 will be available from April next year to encourage homeowners to install more efficient, low-carbon heating systems – like heat pumps – through a £450 million three-year Boiler Upgrade Scheme.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Home Upgrade Grant, Energy Company Obligation and Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery schemes all support the installation of heat pumps for social housing tenants and lower-income homeowners and private tenants. These schemes also support other energy-efficiency measures such as insulation and heating controls to ensure homes are easier to heat and waste less energy.

## ■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[59849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in the context of labour shortages in local authorities for housing maintenance, repairs and retrofit work, what steps he plans to take build capacity to deliver his Net Zero strategy for homes, including the installation of home insulation and heat pumps.

**Greg Hands:**

The Net Zero and Heat and Buildings Strategies set out our plans to work with industry to develop the workforce and create the green jobs needed to decarbonise the economy.

This includes £6.9 million for the Skills Training Competition, designed to get tradespeople professionally trained to deliver the Government's current and future home decarbonisation schemes.

For heat pumps specifically, the Government is working closely with industry and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to ensure that appropriate high-quality training is available both to retrain existing heating installers and to attract new entrants.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[59850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on ensuring that new homes are built to the passive housing standard or to be Net Zero.

**Greg Hands:**

Ministers and officials at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are in regular contact with their counterparts at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to ensure the smooth delivery of the Future Homes Standard (FHS).

When it is implemented in 2025, the FHS will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% lower CO2 emissions compared to those built to current standards, and require no further retrofit to become fully zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[59893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure British homes are insulated in response to recent rises in energy prices.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's Heat and Buildings Strategy sets out the actions we will be taking to reduce emissions from buildings in the near term, including £3.9 billion of new funding.

Part of this new funding has been allocated to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund which will upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below EPC C up to that standard. This will include improvements to insulation.

This funding will also support the Home Upgrade Grant which will provide grants to up to 100,000 low-income households to upgrade the energy performance of the worst quality, off gas grid homes in England. This will typically include insulation measures to make the home heat efficient and suitable for the future as we build towards net zero.

In addition, The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme which commenced in 2013, which is an obligation that the Government has placed on larger energy suppliers to install energy efficiency and heating measures to low income and vulnerable households across GB and has delivered around 3.29m measures in 2.31m homes, up to the end of July 2021.

## ■ Hydrogen: Carbon Emissions

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[59895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of the production of hydrogen on CO2 levels.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's Net Zero Strategy sets out how low carbon hydrogen will be an essential part of our future energy mix. We are currently consulting on a new UK standard for low carbon hydrogen, which will ensure any hydrogen production we support provides genuine carbon savings. As part of this we have published a comprehensive assessment on the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions of different production methods.

The UK Hydrogen Strategy indicates that use of 5 GW low carbon hydrogen could deliver total emissions savings of 41 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e between 2023 and 2032, the equivalent of the carbon captured by 700 million trees over the same period.

## ■ Innovate UK: Finance

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[62894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing Innovate UK funding in the upcoming spending review.

**George Freeman:**

At the Spending Review yesterday, the Government announced a record £39.8 billion for BEIS R&D for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Spending Review secures at least £2.5 billion over the SR for core Innovate UK programmes, a 60% rise in funding between 2021/22 and 2024/25, to ensure it can support business in bringing innovations to market and drive economic growth.

The money will boost private sector investment across the whole of the UK, creating the right conditions for all businesses to innovate and giving them the confidence to do so.

This spending review demonstrates the government's commitment to delivering the Innovation Strategy, with UKRI playing a central role by unleashing business, investing in talent, strengthening our institutions, and developing cutting-edge technology.

## ■ Innovation and Research: Reviews

**Cat Smith:**

[\[59833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the forthcoming independent review of the landscape of UK research organisations referenced in the UK Innovation Strategy will consider the proportion of institutions' work that includes the use of advanced cultures of human cells and tissues, artificial

intelligence and organ-on-a-chip technology and other new approach methodologies (NAMs).

**George Freeman:**

As announced in the Innovation Strategy, Nobel Laureate Professor Sir Paul Nurse is leading an independent Review of the Research, Development, and Innovation Organisational Landscape. The Review will draw on the UK's strengths and experiences and international best practice to enhance the UK research, development, and innovation (RDI) landscape for the future.

The Review focuses on those organisations performing research activity and whether the current institutional mix is calibrated to deliver the highest quality research. It will support the UK RDI landscape to remain world-class and competitive in an increasingly globalised and contested environment.

The Terms of Reference for the Review were published on 1 October 2021. A final report is expected to be published in Spring 2022.

■ **Life Sciences: Public Expenditure**

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[62895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received from representatives of the life sciences sector on the upcoming Spending Review.

**George Freeman:**

A range of representations from the Life Sciences sector on their Spending Review priorities were formally submitted to HM Treasury for consideration.

In addition, the Government has continued to engage with the sector throughout the Spending Review process. There was also broad engagement with the sector in co-developing the Life Sciences Vision, published in July 2021, which sets out the Government's priorities for the sector and informed work on the 2021 Spending Review.

■ **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: Life Sciences**

**Chris Green:**

[\[59817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the proposals for change to NICE methods and processes in the context of the Life Sciences Vision published in July 2021.

**George Freeman:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) plays a crucial role in sustaining the UK's position as a life sciences superpower and will continue to play a pivotal role in delivering the ambitions set out in the Life Sciences Vision, which was co-developed by Government and the sector.

NICE is continuing to deliver its Methods Review which will ensure NICE retains its global leadership in the evaluation and appraisal of new medicines and technologies. As an independent body, NICE is responsible for its own methods and processes.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will continue to work closely with the wide range of public and private sector bodies and stakeholders across the sector, including NICE, to deliver the Life Sciences Vision.

**Chris Green:**

[\[59818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is planning to take to help ensure that changes to NICE methods and processes support the Life Sciences Vision's strategic goals.

**George Freeman:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) plays a crucial role in sustaining the UK's position as a life sciences superpower and will continue to play a pivotal role in delivering the ambitions set out in the Life Sciences Vision, which was co-developed by Government and the sector.

As reflected in Life Sciences Vision, NICE is continuing to deliver its high ambition Methods and Process Review. This will ensure NICE retains its global leadership in the evaluation and appraisal of new medicines and technologies.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will continue to work closely with the wide range of public and private sector bodies and stakeholders across the sector, including NICE, to deliver the Life Sciences Vision.

## ■ Offshore Industry: Carbon Emissions

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[59891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the Government's new oil and gas developments on the Government's goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

All scenarios proposed by the Climate Change Committee setting out how the Government could meet its 2050 net zero emissions target include continuing demand for oil and natural gas.

Even with continued new development, the UK is expected to consume more oil and gas than it produces in the coming decades. This is because production from the UK Continental Shelf is declining rapidly as the basin matures. Existing licensed but undeveloped oil and gas assets are already factored into the Government's projections for future production, as well as associated emissions.

The Oil and Gas Authority's (OGA's) new strategy, which came into force in February 2021, integrates net zero considerations into the development consent process. This strategy provided the OGA with tools they can use to help ensure that new developments are designed and operated as cleanly as possible, in line with the Government's net zero obligation.



Looking forward, the Government will introduce a climate compatibility checkpoint which will be used to assess whether any future licensing rounds remain in keeping with the Government's climate goals.

### ■ Private Rented Housing: Carbon Emissions

**Kim Johnson:**

[\[59993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure the retro-fitting of private rented housing to meet net zero carbon targets.

**Greg Hands:**

Since April 2020, all privately rented homes in England and Wales are required to meet a minimum energy efficiency standard of EPC band E, unless a valid exemption applies. BEIS has consulted on raising the minimum energy efficiency standards for privately rented homes in England and Wales to EPC band C. Under the Government's lead proposed option, landlords would be required to spend up to £10,000 to reach EPC Band C for new tenancies from 1 April 2025 and all tenancies by 1 April 2028.

In the Net Zero Strategy, the Government committed to consider an ultimate backstop date to ensure that all homes meet a net zero minimum energy performance standard before 2050, where cost effective, practical, and affordable.

### ■ Renewable Energy: Community Development

**Kate Osborne:**

[\[59980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to ensure that the Local Electricity Bill achieves its aim of unblocking the potential for community renewable energy generation.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government agrees with the broad intentions of the Local Electricity Bill, but does not support it as the means to enable local energy supply. There are already mechanisms in the market to allow local supply. The current Ofgem regulatory regime allows for a company to supply a specific geographic area, and small-scale generators can also apply for a licence exemption in some cases to reduce the regulatory burdens of operating at a community level.

The Government supports community energy projects through the Rural Community Energy Fund and will work with Ofgem to ensure that local communities can play their role in delivering Net Zero and a Green Recovery.

### ■ Renewable Energy: Scotland

**Ian Murray:**

[\[61139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the provisions laid out in section



185 of the Energy Act 2004 to make an order to reform the UK transmission charge regime to assist Scottish renewable energy generators; and if he will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's assessment of the potential use of powers under Section 185 of the Energy Act 2004 to adjust transmission powers is set out in the 'Policy Response' section at page 7 of Government Response of June 2018 to a consultation on proposed amendments to the Contracts for Difference scheme. It is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/contracts-for-difference-cfd-proposed-amendments-to-the-scheme>.

The assessment points to transmission charging as a matter for Ofgem, the value of cost-reflective charges, and Contracts for Difference contracts as the focus of Government support for renewable energy generation projects.

■ **Retail Trade: Scotland**

**Ian Murray:**

[59775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of Scottish retail, tourism and hospitality industries in response to their concerns about a lack of footfall in Scotland's major cities.

**Paul Scully:**

Ministers engage regularly with various representatives of the business, hospitality, retail and tourism industries in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland including local Chambers of Commerce, and branches of the Confederation of British Industry, Federation of Small Business and Institute of Directors on business and economic issues. In addition, DCMS Ministers who are responsible for tourism engage with Scottish tourism industry representatives via the Tourism Industry Council.

■ **Tidal Power: Scotland**

**Ian Murray:**

[61138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of ring-fenced support from the Contracts for Difference AR4 process for Scottish renewable tidal energy.

**Ian Murray:**

[61140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will create a ring-fenced pot in the Contracts for Difference AR4 process for tidal energy.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department published the draft parameters for Allocation Round 4 of the Contracts for Difference scheme on 13 September 2021. The Department has not set out a specific ringfence for tidal projects. However, as a less established renewable technology, tidal stream will be eligible to compete in Pot 2 in the next auction round in December.

**■ Wind Power: Carbon Emissions****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[59726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) onshore wind needed to reach the new target for decarbonising the electricity by 2035, and (b) implications of that matter for levelling up the economy.

**Greg Hands:**

As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, a low-cost, net zero consistent, electricity system is most likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar, complemented by other low carbon generation technologies such as nuclear and power CCUS to ensure security of supply and a significant increase in flexibility.

However, as set out in the Energy White Paper a sustained increase of locally supported onshore wind in the 2020s and beyond will be required to meet our Carbon Budget 6 target. Onshore wind and other established renewable technologies such as solar PV will be able to compete in the next Contracts for Difference (CfD) allocation round, opening in December 2021. Government is seeking up to 5GW of capacity from established renewables technologies, with a £10m budget, which will support investment in all parts of Great Britain.

**■ Wind Power: Employment****Emily Thornberry:**[\[58332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the number of jobs that (a) have been and (b) will be created as a result of (i) UK private, (ii) Government and (iii) inward investment as part of the Government's plans to advance offshore wind between November 2020 and November 2030.

**Greg Hands:**

Through Government support, electricity generated from offshore wind has increased from less than 1% in 2010 to 13% in 2020.

This has made the UK a world leader in wind energy, including support for manufacturing infrastructure, is directly supporting the creation of green jobs in the UK. Just this year six manufacturers have already announced major investments in the UK offshore wind sector, supported by Government investment schemes, and delivering up to 3,600 jobs by 2030.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Access to Work Programme: Sign Language****Caroline Lucas:**[\[59765\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prompt Payment Policy applies to payments due from Government

departments to (a) sign-language interpreters and (b) other self-employed people providing services to Government departments; if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on delays to payments to sign-language interpreters providing services to Access to Work claimants on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Ellis:**

As per the Public Contract Regulations 2015, public sector buyers must include 30-day payment terms in new public sector contracts. Public sector buyers must also make sure this payment term is passed down the supply chain.

Government departments are committed to paying all valid and undisputed invoices within 30 days. Government departments publish their payment performance against 5 and 30 days on a quarterly basis on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk). DWP's latest [published report](#) shows they paid 95.7% of valid and undisputed invoices within 5 days and 99.5% of valid and undisputed invoices in 30 days covering April - June of this year.

■ **EU Law: Brexit**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[59865\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) factors, (b) tests and (c) decision-making frameworks will be used by the Cabinet Office in the process of taking decisions over whether or not to alter or replace retained EU legislation.

**Michael Ellis:**

The exact structures and decision-making frameworks are still being decided. The Cabinet Office lead on the review and are working closely with departments across Whitehall. They will regularly engage with a range of stakeholders and legal experts to review retained EU law, and seek their input into decision-making.

We have already committed to creating a new standing commission to receive ideas from any British citizen on how to repeal or improve regulation. This standing commission will feed into the relevant committees and decision-making fora.

■ **Honours Forfeiture Committee**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[62630\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date he last convened the Honours Forfeiture Committee.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Forfeiture Committee last convened on 20th May 2021.

■ **Visits Abroad: Portugal**

**Nick Smith:**

[\[62697\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost was of the Minister of State, Lord Frost's visit to Portugal in October 2021.

**Michael Ellis:**

Details of Ministers' overseas travel are published quarterly on GOV.UK.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Agnes Wanjiru

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[62729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to establish an inquiry into the potential involvement of British soldiers in the death of Agnes Wanjiru in Kenya in 2012; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Diane Abbott:**

[\[63647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support the Government is providing to the Kenyan police in their investigation into the 2012 death of Agnes Wanjiru; and if he will make a statement.

**Leo Docherty:**

At the heart of the hon. Member's questions is the murder of a young Kenyan woman. Justice must be foremost in our minds. Therefore, you will appreciate that I can say nothing here which may jeopardise any future legal process in Kenya.

This issue is sub judice, in another Country's jurisdiction, and there is a significant risk that further public discussion would undermine the investigation into this murder and prejudice their inquiries and any trial.

Whilst the Kenyan police do have the lead for this investigation, I can assure you that the Royal Military Police are fully engaged in assisting them.

### ■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[62759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including injuries sustained after a service member has left the armed forces, if that injury is directly related to one sustained whilst in service, in the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme provides compensation for any injury, illness, or death which is caused by service on or after 6 April 2005. Where an injury is partly caused, or made worse, by service, compensation is payable if, on the balance of probabilities, service is the predominant cause of the injury or of the worsening of the injury.

In circumstances where an injury unexpectedly deteriorates, consequential problems develop beyond those anticipated, or a further injury develops, the award given may no longer be appropriate and the recipient can request a review. The review can result in the award being maintained or increased, but not its reduction or removal.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[63924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme process for veterans.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[63925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of using Veterans UK medical advisors rather than independent medical experts in the veterans compensation process.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Ministry of Defence is committed to ensuring that the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) delivers for those who make a claim. Mechanisms of accountability ensure that this is the case and include the Quinquennial Review to confirm AFCS remains fit for purpose, monthly review against Key Performance Indicators, and bi-monthly review in conjunction with the Office of Veterans Affairs. The Central Advisory Committee on Compensation also affords Armed Forces charities opportunity to discuss all aspects of compensation, including the efficiency of AFCS.

The AFCS uses independent medical experts through the Independent Medical Expert Group, an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body. This provides assurance that AFCS policy and decision-making reflect contemporary medical understanding of causation and prognosis. Any apparent anomalies in AFCS tariffs are examined and recommendations made accordingly. Veterans UK medical advisors are independent from clinicians and have had a career in clinical medicine. They are trained in medico-legal determinations and AFCS legislation. They give case-specific advice based on the claimant's service and in-line with prevailing medical understanding.

## ■ **Armed Forces: Financial Services**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[60349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans require the Armed Forces to offer training on financial resilience, including (a) planning for retirement and (b) building savings; and if he will make a statement.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Ministry of Defence is working to raise financial awareness among Service personnel. We provide our personnel with briefings from the Royal British Legion MoneyForce initiative which aim to assist all Service personnel, their partners, families and dependants, to be better equipped to manage their money and financial affairs.

All three Services provide links on their welfare sites to several financial advisory sites including MoneyForce, Joining Forces Credit Union (JFCU) and the Services Insurance and Investment Advisory Panel. The Ministry of Defence makes it possible for Service personnel who are members of JFCU to save with a contribution directly from their salary into their savings account.

In addition, the British Forces Broadcasting Service have run financial awareness campaigns with the Money and Pensions Service and with JFCU to highlight everything from savings/loans to pensions.

■ **Armed Forces: Prostitution**

**Jess Phillips:** [62746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the current code of conduct is with respect to serving military personnel engaging in the sexual exploitation of prostituted women and men in the UK and abroad.

**Jess Phillips:** [62747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on how many occasions military personnel have been found to have engaged in the sexual exploitation of women and men in the last five years; and what disciplinary action resulted.

**James Heappey:**

Defence recognises the devastating and long-term impact that Sexual Exploitation and Abuse has on those who are victims of it, and that it is an abuse of trust and power which causes immeasurable harm to those who are affected. We have existing policies on the values, standards, and behaviours expected of all service personnel and any allegation of sexual offending, wherever it occurs, must be referred to the Service Police. We have adopted the NATO policy for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse on peace-keeping operations and we are building on that to develop a policy to be applied overseas and in the United Kingdom. Anyone found to fall short of the Services' high standards or to have committed an offence will be dealt with robustly, which can include imprisonment and dismissal from Service.

At present, the sexual exploitation of any person is not recorded as an offence in its own right, however, any criminal activity or undesirable behaviour is recorded by the specific type of offence or prohibited behaviour which took place and we publish details of those offences on a yearly basis:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sexual-offences-in-the-service-justice-system>

■ **Army: Scotland**

**Kenny MacAskill:** [62877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 59966 on Army: Scotland, if he will define what is meant by domestic audiences in that answer.

**James Heappey:**

Domestic audiences are defined as the UK populace.

## ■ Gulf of Aden: Shipping

**John Healey:**

[\[62572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department has taken to increase the security for UK civilian shipping in the Gulf of Aden.

**James Heappey:**

The UK is committed to ensuring security and freedom of navigation for UK civilian shipping, including in the Gulf of Aden. The UK has a long-established maritime presence in the Gulf and Indian Ocean, including a forward based frigate operating from the UK's maritime base in Bahrain, and the development of an advanced facility at Duqm. The UK also participates in maritime security operations in the region, including through the Combined Maritime Forces and the International Maritime Security Construct. The MOD communicates the latest security advice and updates to commercial shipping via the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations.

## ■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Diesel Fuel

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[62874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many litres of diesel have been consumed by (a) HMS Queen Elizabeth and (b) HMS Queen Elizabeth's air wing since leaving Portsmouth on 22 May 2021.

**James Heappey:**

To date, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH has travelled over 27,000 nautical miles during her maiden Carrier Strike Group deployment.

The Government does not disclose operational information about the fuel consumption of Royal Navy assets as to do so would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

## ■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Fuels

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[62875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the fuel consumption per nautical mile is for HMS Queen Elizabeth; and what distance that vessel sailed on Operation Fortis.

**James Heappey:**

To date, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH has travelled over 27,000 nautical miles during her maiden Carrier Strike Group deployment.

The Government does not disclose operational information about the fuel consumption of Royal Navy assets as to do so would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.



**■ Iraq and Syria: Military Intervention**

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[60494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of civilian casualties as a result of British airstrikes against ISIS as part of the US-led Coalition in Iraq and Syria.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[60495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using open source data and other information from monitoring organisations to support investigations into possible civilian harm incidences from UK airstrikes.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[60496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of investigating, and reinvestigating where necessary, specific instances of possible civilian harm resulting from UK airstrikes as part of the US-led Coalition in Iraq and Syria flagged by monitoring organisations; and if he will publish the results of those investigations.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[60497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the difference between the mechanisms the US use and the mechanisms his Department uses, to monitor and investigate instances of possible civilian harm from airstrikes with the US-led Coalition in Iraq and Syria.

**James Heappey:**

The UK follows robust procedures and uses all available evidence when conducting battle damage assessments. Parliament will always be informed of any instance where we assess a UK airstrike is responsible for a civilian casualty incident, whether incurred during a new strike, or as a result of re-examining historic strikes using new information. Specifically under Operation SHADER, the UK's contribution to the US-led Coalition, Operation INHERENT RESOLVE, the UK has conducted airstrikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria. The UK has accepted responsibility for one civilian casualty that occurred during an airstrike on Daesh fighters in eastern Syria on 26 March 2018. This incident was subject to a Written Ministerial Statement on 2 May 2018. However, we accept the possibility that there could be other instances of civilian casualties about which we are unaware, despite our best efforts to assess battle damage. For that reason, in 2016, the then Defence Secretary committed that MOD officials would work with civil society organisations on this issue. As a result, we always re-examine any new information relating to a potential incident submitted to us by such organisations, where it is possible that UK forces may have been involved.



## ■ Navy: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[62876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the greenhouse gas emissions of the UK's Carrier Strike Group 21 during Operation Fortis.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence is committed to supporting the Government's commitment to Net Zero Green House Gas Emissions by 2050.

The flagship of the Carrier Strike Group, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH has been designed, as far as possible, to minimise impact on the environment, incorporating many new technologies, such as integrated platform management system which allows only the minimum number of engines to be operated, adapting to demand.

## ■ Oman: Armed Forces

**John Healey:**

[\[62573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK troops have been stationed in Oman in each year from 2015.

**James Heappey:**

We cannot disclose the information you have requested as it would prejudice the relationship between the United Kingdom and another State.

## ■ Oman: Detainees

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[62873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he made of the implications for his policies of new allegations that members of the Shihuh tribe in Musandam were among those detainees that Lord Parker's Inquiry said were subjected to illegal interrogation techniques by British troops in the Persian Gulf in 1970-71.

**James Heappey:**

We are not aware of any new allegations of wrongdoing. The UK Government does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone unlawful killing, the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment ("CIDT"), or extraordinary rendition. In no circumstance will UK personnel ever take action amounting to torture, unlawful killing, extraordinary rendition, or CIDT. The UK takes suggested incidents of this kind very seriously.

The UK's aim is to develop and promote human rights in those countries with which it deals, consistent with the lead the UK has taken in international efforts to eradicate the mistreatment of detainees.

The UK and Oman have a very close bi-lateral relationship, all elements of which take into account the need to respect international humanitarian law. All UK Armed Services personnel must adhere to strict rules when interacting with detainees.

**■ Warships: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[62628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 56827 on Warships: Logistics, what comparative analysis he has undertaken of the effectiveness of the way in which the United States conducts those transfers.

**James Heappey:**

The Lightning Force, the Carrier Strike Group and the United Kingdom Armed Forces have robust logistics supply chains. There is no requirement to undertake a comparative analysis on the effectiveness of the supply chains of another nation's military.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[62629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 56828 on Military Aircraft, whether it is necessary for that operation to be certified by the Military Aviation Authority.

**James Heappey:**

The clearance for suitability of carriage of specific underslung loads by military rotary wing aircraft is not part of the Military Aviation Authority (MAA) Military Type Certification (MTC) process. Loads are individually assessed by the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit of the Air and Space Warfare Centre who, if appropriate, issue the clearance. These clearances are incorporated into the Air Transport Operations Manual (DAP 101A-1105-1B: "Carriage of Cargo by Helicopters Underslung Load Clearances") sponsored by the RAF Release to Service Authority, in accordance with the relevant processes laid out in MAA Regulatory Publications.

**■ Yemen: Armed Conflict**

**John Healey:** [\[62574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the conflict in Yemen on the security of the UK's interests in that region.

**James Heappey:**

The ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen pose risks to regional stability and to UK interests. Cross-border attacks from Yemen into Saudi Arabia are a significant concern. Terrorist and militia groups are also able to exploit the instability caused by the conflict.

To bring about long-term stability in Yemen, an inclusive political settlement is needed. The UK fully supports the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Hans Grunberg.

## ■ Yemen: Gulf Cooperation Council

**John Healey:**

[\[62575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with the Gulf Cooperation Council on the security situation in Yemen.

**James Heapey:**

The Defence Secretary regularly speaks to his counterparts in GCC member countries on regional security matters including the situation in Yemen.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Ministers

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[61091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of her Department's ministers have been exempted from quarantine in a hotel after returning to the UK from a covid-19 red list country to which they have travelled for the purposes of conducting official business.

**Julia Lopez:**

No DCMS Ministers have received exemptions from undertaking Managed Quarantine Service in a quarantine hotel after returning from a Covid-19 red list country for the purposes of conducting official business for DCMS.

### ■ Historic Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

**Laura Trott:**

[\[59979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking ahead of COP26 to promote the importance of traditional craft and building skills to help (a) adapt and (b) sympathetically retrofit historic buildings in response to climate change.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Traditional craft and building skills have an essential role in helping to adapt and sympathetically retrofit historic buildings in response to climate change.

We recognise that there is a skills shortage in this area. Historic England, Government's Advisor on the Historic Environment is working with the Government and the heritage sector to address this issue by developing career pathways into the sector and supporting individuals at different stages in their careers, focussing particularly on apprenticeships and on the job training, such as those provided by the Hamish Ogston Heritage Building Skills programme.

**■ Property: Broadband****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[62708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of mandating full fibre broadband in newbuild properties.

**Julia Lopez:**

It is a priority for this Government to ensure that new homes are built with fast, reliable and resilient broadband. Following a public consultation supported by evidence, my department set out a policy in 2020 to mandate that new homes get the connectivity they need. We will shortly launch a statutory technical consultation on legislative proposals to amend the Building Regulations 2010 in England, ensuring that new build homes are developed with both gigabit-ready infrastructure and gigabit-capable connections. Following this final consultation stage, we will lay regulations as soon as parliamentary time allows.

**EDUCATION****■ All Saints School York****Rachael Maskell:**[\[62774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that pupils at All Saints school in York can learn in safe and appropriate school buildings.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The former Minister for the School System met with representatives from All Saints school, the Diocese of Middlesbrough and York City Council in June to discuss the condition issues facing the school, and a capital adviser from the department visited the school in July to understand the condition of the buildings. I have written to the Member for York Central regarding this matter.

The department allocates annual condition funding to schools and those responsible for school buildings to support them meet their duties to maintain schools in safe and operational condition. Local authorities, large multi-academy trusts and large voluntary-aided bodies (such as dioceses) receive a School Condition Allocation to invest in priorities across the schools for which they are responsible.

The Dioceses of Leeds and Middlesbrough chain received a combined School Condition Allocation of £3,112,383 in the 2021-22 financial year to invest in improving the condition of their schools. All Saints Roman Catholic School also received a Devolved Formula Capital payment of £32,247 in the 2021-22 financial year to spend on their capital priorities.

The department is also replacing poor condition and ageing school buildings with modern, energy efficient designs through the School Rebuilding Programme. The first 100 schools in the programme have been announced as part of a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade. Further details of the programme are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>. The department recently launched a consultation on its approach to prioritising schools for future rounds of the programme, which ran until 8 October 2021. We plan to publish the response and details of the future prioritisation process in early 2022.

## ■ Educational Institutions and Student Unions: Freedom of Expression

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

**[62562]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy (a) that the costs of any court action against (i) educational establishments and (ii) student unions which are found to have failed to protect freedom of speech are borne by the Government and not the individual; and (b) to permit withdrawal, under his direction, of public funding from such establishments.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The new Office for Students (OfS) complaints scheme to be established by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill will provide an accessible, cost-free route for individuals to complain against a registered higher education provider or students' union, where they have suffered adverse consequences as a result of a breach of the new freedom of speech and academic freedom duties. The government expects that the vast majority of complainants will choose this route before considering going to court, as there are no costs involved in bringing a complaint.

Individuals will also have the right to seek damages in the courts. If a provider or students' union is found by the courts to have breached their duties, the court may order that they pay the costs of the claimant.

The OfS will have the power to issue sanctions to higher education providers where there has been a breach of the new freedom of speech registration conditions (which require compliance with the new duties). These include financial penalties, as well as suspension and the ultimate sanction of de-registration, effectively depriving the provider of access to public funds. The OfS will also be able to issue monetary penalties against students' unions found to be in breach of their freedom of speech duties.

## ■ Schools: Construction

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[62773]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria proposals for new capital building projects will be required to meet; and what steps he will take to determine the priority for new build schools.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The School Rebuilding Programme was announced in 2020 with a commitment to 500 rebuilding and refurbishment projects over the next decade. We announced the first 100 projects in the programme earlier this year. Further details, including the approach used to prioritise these schools, are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>.

A consultation on the approach to prioritising schools for future places in the programme closed on 8 October 2021. We plan to publish the response and details of the future prioritisation process in early 2022.

The department approves new free schools through the central free schools route. The process is competitive, and bids are assessed by the department against the specific criteria for each free school round. The most recent application round closed in November 2019 and the department is not currently accepting bids for new free schools. The department will set out plans for further free school approvals in due course.

In addition to the centrally delivered free schools route, local authorities can build new schools under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 'free school presumption route'). We provide funding for all the places that are needed, based on local authorities' own data on pupil forecasts. Local authorities use this funding to provide places in new schools or through expansions of existing schools. They can work with any school in their local area, including academies and free schools and have the flexibility to make the best decisions for their local area.

#### ■ Schools: Ventilation

**Peter Kyle:** [\[62784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many CO2 monitors were distributed to schools by the end of the autumn 2021 term (a) nationally, (b) regionally and (c) by local authority.

**Peter Kyle:** [\[62785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools received their full allocation of CO2 monitors by the end of the autumn 2021 term.

**Munira Wilson:** [\[62878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's Press Release, published on 21 August 2021, when he expects all 300,000 carbon dioxide monitors to have been delivered to schools; and how many of those monitors have been delivered by 25 October 2021.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The CO2 monitor roll out began in September across special schools and alternative provision, who were prioritised to receive their monitors first given their higher-than-average numbers of vulnerable pupils. These settings have now received their full allocation of monitors. Monitors are now being dispatched to all schools and other eligible settings over the remainder of the autumn term. The roll out is on track, and we expect all eligible settings to have received their monitors by the end of the autumn term.

The department will begin publishing delivery data from 4 November. The first publication will cover all deliveries up to 25 October.

## ■ T-levels

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[62791]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether T-Level students in England can resit (a) a component or (b) components of their course; and how those resits will be funded for each student.

**Alex Burghart:**

T Levels have several components that are required for completion. Students can re-take all elements of the T Level Technical Qualification and the timing of retakes will depend on the availability of assessments set by the T Level awarding organisation. As per study programmes for young people, retakes of components are not generally eligible for funding as the activity has already been funded. In exceptional circumstances students may be eligible for funding, and institutions will need to consider the relevant funding guidance.

T Levels require students to have achieved level 2 mathematics and English by the end of their course, either through Functional Skills or GCSEs, and students will be able to resit these throughout their course. Institutions also have the discretion to allow students to make up the required industry placements hours, up to 2 years after finishing their T Level programme, should they need to. This is the same for other T Level components.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[62792]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) art and design, (b) sport and (c) music and performing arts will be offered as T-Level courses for students in England.

**Alex Burghart:**

We are introducing over 20 T Levels in a wide range of subject areas by 2023, which will boost access to high quality technical education for thousands of young people.

There are no plans currently to introduce T Levels in the areas of art and design, sport or music and the performing arts. T Levels in craft and design will be made available from 2023 and will contain content of relevance to the art and design sector – including occupational specialisms such as textiles, ceramics and jewellery making. The outline content for this qualification can be found at:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/5021/craft-and-design-final-outline-content.pdf>.

The T Level in Media, Broadcast and Production, also due to be introduced from 2023, will offer occupational specialisms of relevance to the music and performing arts industry, including Creative Media Technician, Events and Venues Technician and Content Creation and Production. The outline content for this qualification can be found at: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/t-levels/approved-t-level-technical-qualifications-and-final-outline-content/final-outline-content/> under the heading 'creative and design'.

We are not currently developing any further T Levels. In July we set out our final plans for the range of situations where we see a role for other technical qualifications



to sit alongside T Levels, further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reforms-to-post-16-qualifications-at-level-3-in-england>. For 16-19 year olds this includes qualifications enabling entry to occupations not covered by T Levels.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[62793]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to (a) support colleges to organise industry placements for T- Level students in England and (b) guarantee that all T-Level students in England can secure industry placements.

**Alex Burghart:**

We have provided an extensive programme of support to providers to help them to deliver high-quality industry placements. Alongside this we have invested more than £200 million over the past 4 years to help providers build their capacity and relationships with employers. Further to this, a comprehensive package of support offers providers tailored advice and support to deliver placements and networking opportunities to share best practice.

Practical industry placement delivery guidance for both providers and employers has been published and we are investing in direct support for employers to increase the number of industry placements available. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-industry-placements-delivery-guidance/t-level-industry-placements-delivery-guidance>. We continue to engage

directly with employers through the National Apprenticeship Service to provide a strong pipeline ready to offer placement opportunities, and a targeted package of support is helping employers across all industries to effectively plan and implement placements. A T Level employer ambassador network has been established in order to engage with others in their industries on T Levels and placements, and we are further developing our communications materials to continue to raise the profile of T Levels to an employer audience.

Finally, we have put in place a short-term incentive fund, offering employers £1,000 per industry placement, to encourage employer engagement in the period after the COVID-19 outbreak.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agriculture: Vacancies

**Sir Roger Gale:**

**[903878]**

What assessment his Department has made of the effect of labour shortages on the harvesting of crops in autumn 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra is working closely with farmers and growers to address labour shortages and help them secure the labour needed for harvesting. This year, the Seasonal Workers Pilot has been expanded for 2021 to 30,000 visas. Growers can also recruit workers



with status under the EU Settlement Scheme. We are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to support the horticulture sector in recruiting more UK workers, and undertaking a review to examine the potential for automation to meet future need.

## ■ **Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[62790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to speed up the transition from culling badgers to vaccinating cattle to reduce the spread of bovine tuberculosis in England.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As set out in the Government response to Professor Sir Charles Godfray's review of the Government's strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free status for England, the next phase of the strategy focuses on developing a deployable cattle vaccine, wider rollout of badger vaccination and improvements to TB testing.

Badger culling will not be halted immediately – as set out in the Government's response to the January 2021 consultation<sup>[1]</sup>, no new intensive cull licences will be issued after 2022 and new supplementary badger culling licences have been limited to a maximum of two years. Culling would remain an option where epidemiological assessment indicates that it is needed.

We have awarded funding for a five-year badger vaccination programme in East Sussex. The scheme, which will see vaccination deployed by the farming community, will help refine future delivery models for deploying large-scale farmer-led vaccination schemes. We are also undertaking Government-funded badger vaccination in an area where four-year intensive badger culling has ended. We are continuing to bolster our capability to deploy even more badger vaccination in post-cull areas from 2022.

Developing a deployable cattle TB vaccine, with the objective of introduction within the next five years, is one of the Government's top priorities. In 2021, world-leading bTB cattle vaccination trials began in England and Wales.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bovine-tuberculosis-proposals-to-help-eradicate-disease-in-england>

## ■ **Dangerous Dogs**

**Chris Elmore:**

**[59916]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will undertake a review of the adequacy of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and related breed specific and dog control legislation to increase protections for the public and animal welfare.

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra commissioned Middlesex University to examine measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible ownership of all breeds of dogs. The research, which will be published shortly, considers different approaches and the effectiveness of current dog control measures.

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Heating****Jake Berry:**[\[58825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what type of heating system is the primary source of heating in each building occupied by his Department and its agencies; and what fuel is used by those heating systems.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Identifying opportunities to decarbonise the department's heating systems is already underway and the following breakdown of fuel sources has already been identified.

On the 93 sites that the Department provides heating:

- 53 are provided by gas
- 13 by electric
- 11 by other Government departments or local Government offices where we are a minority occupier in their buildings.
- 8 sites covered by service charges. This is the case in many small sites where we have a small office at a point of entry.
- 4 by oil
- 3 by biomass
- 1 by LPG

A number of Defra's buildings will become part of the Government Property Agency's (GPA) Government property model and GPA is leading net zero plans to decarbonise these buildings. Defra will support these plans where required.

The buildings that remain under Defra group Property's remit will be decarbonised as much as possible by the department's Spending Review plans and by bidding for funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. These plans include the deployment of air or ground source heat pumps to support or replace existing heating systems, a move towards electrical heating and a better use of building management systems to achieve zonal heating to avoid heating unoccupied parts of a building.

There is also some exploratory work underway to look at the viability of hydrogen fuel heating and power generation which could help significantly with the decarbonisation of the laboratory sites.

The department will not rely on carbon offsets as a means to decarbonise buildings, instead making the reduction of direct emissions the primary aim.

## ■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Ministerial Responsibility

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[59956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the Ministerial responsibilities of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in his Department, the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds.

**George Eustice:**

The Ministerial responsibilities of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in my Department, the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds, will be published on gov.uk in due course.

## ■ Environment Protection: Finance

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[62897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2021 to Question 54035 on Environment Protection: Finance, what proportion of the 130 funded projects were nature-based defence projects; and what proportion of the total number of applications received by his Department were nature-based defence projects.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Between 2015 and 2021, government funding enabled the completion of over 700 projects to better protect 300,000 homes from flooding. Of these, 130 projects included nature-based solutions to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk.

The Environment Agency allocate money based on where there is the greatest need for a scheme to help manage flood risk to communities. A variety of solutions from hard defences to more natural measures are assessed once funding has been allocated. Information on the number of 'applications' for nature-based defence projects is therefore not available.

## ■ Fertilisers: Shortages

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[62654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of potential shortages of fertiliser products over winter 2021-22, and what discussions he has had with suppliers and the agricultural sector on those potential shortages.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are aware that due to the increase in cost of natural gas across the globe, which is a key input for the production of ammonium nitrate-based fertiliser products, the cost of production of these fertiliser types has increased significantly. This has also increased the cost of other alternative fertiliser types. This is an issue affecting Europe and the global market with fertiliser companies halting production due to high input costs. However, the recent deal announced with industry and CF Fertilisers will help to alleviate the pressure on the domestic market.

Defra has been in regular contact with industry including the NFU and fertiliser producers and importers, and we have frequent contact with the key sector representative body for fertilisers, the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC). The situation and impact on farmers in particular and industry more widely is being monitored closely.

Alternatives to ammonium nitrate do exist and farmers will be looking closely at these options and how best they can be utilised. Support from producers of these products on how best to use them and to get the best nutrient uptake for crop has been offered.

## ■ Flood Control: Lincolnshire

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[62896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of Lincolnshire County Council's Homeowner Property Flood Resilience assistance scheme trial; and what plans his Department has to introduce similar schemes across the UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Property level resilience measures can play a key role in reducing flood risk and helping people get back into their homes quicker following a flood. We welcome the initiative shown by Lincolnshire County Council in developing a local Property Flood Resilience (PFR) scheme and are keen to hear about the lessons learned.

On 1 February 2021, the Government published a call for evidence on local factors in managing flood and coastal erosion risk. Part 2 sought evidence about the key PFR enablers to help inform policy development and the action required to drive the uptake of PFR. It looked at a range of enablers including the role of funding and incentives. The Government will publish a roadmap by the end of 2022 setting out how we can further accelerate take-up of property flood resilience measures. This will ensure all relevant bodies are playing their part and that consumers can have assurance about the quality of products and their installation.

The Government invested £2.9 million from the 2018 budget to support regional PFR pathfinder projects in Yorkshire, the South West and Oxford-Cambridge Arc. These projects developed interventions to promote use and understanding of PFR. This scheme has just concluded and is being evaluated.

Our 2015-21 floods capital investment programme provided grant in aid to reduce flood risk to 3,000 homes through PFR measures. The current six-year FCERM programme looks to double the number of homes better protected by PFR.

We are also making changes to the Flood Re scheme, including changes to promote the uptake of PFR by permitting Flood Re to offer additional money above the cost of a claim so properties can be repaired in a more resilient way. The Government aims for the changes to take effect in April 2022, subject to Parliamentary time and final preparations by the industry.

## ■ Food: Exports

**Greg Smith:**

[903877]

What steps he is taking to support food and drink exporters.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We want people at home and abroad to be lining up to Buy British. We have announced an export package to support food and drink producers, and will be establishing an Export Council. This will bring together industry and Government to drive export growth. We are also expanding our agri-food counsellor network to make sure that our sectors can take advantage of export opportunities.

## ■ Litter

**Chi Onwurah:**

[903880]

What steps he is taking to reduce the amount of litter in the environment.

**Jo Churchill:**

Since publishing our 2017 Litter Strategy we have both increased and introduced new penalties for littering, launched an anti-litter campaign with Keep Britain Tidy and provided nearly £1 million to help councils purchase new bins.

More recently, we have brought together chewing gum producers to establish a voluntary producer responsibility scheme through which they will invest up to £10 million over five years to help clean up our streets and facilitate long-term behaviour change.

## ■ Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances

**Emma Hardy:**

[62823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on the levels of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in drinking water; whether he plans to collect further data and commission research to determine those levels; and what plans he has to introduce limits to PFAS in drinking water.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency has published data on the prevalence of PFAS in the environment, as part of their environmental surveillance programme which is here: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/landing>.

In England, Defra and the Drinking Water Inspectorate are working closely with other regulators to assess levels of PFAS, their sources, the potential risks including to drinking water, and have initiated research into fully quantitative analytical methods which should be ready by spring 2022. The Inspectorate has recently written to water companies, introducing additional requirements for sampling, testing and monitoring for PFAS in raw water sources from which abstractions are used for drinking water. Information gathered will inform water company risk assessments and support future drinking water policy and regulatory approaches.

## ■ Pollinators

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[62880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what measures are in place to assess the long term effects of pesticides on wild bees and other pollinators.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[62881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve assessments on the long term effects of pesticides on wild bees and other pollinators.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[62882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has had recent discussions with stakeholders on the long term effects of pesticides on wild bees and other pollinators.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Linking pesticide usage directly to changes in wild bees and other pollinators remains challenging because of the range of pressures which affect pollinators, in addition to the complexities of assessing and attributing pesticide usage and risk to impacts. In 2019, alongside leading academics, we published evidence statements on what is known, and not known, about the status and responses to pressures and management of pollinators, including in relation to pesticide use.

We have funded research into the exposure of honeybees to pesticides through analysing pesticide residues in honey samples from across the country and using metabarcoding to understand how honeybees are exposed to these pesticides. We expect the results of this work to be published soon. We are also currently funding research looking at how we could develop our monitoring to better understand the effects of pesticides on pollinators, as well as routes of exposure.

Furthermore, Defra is developing a Pesticide Load Indicator which takes account of both the chemical properties of pesticides used and the weight applied. This uses pesticide usage data, ecotoxicity and environmental data to better understand how the pressure from pesticides on the environment, including bees, has changed over time. Much of this research will be published in 2022.

We also publish an indicator of the status of pollinating insects, which measures how widespread each of almost 400 species is in each year since 1980. It shows long-term decline, but minor change over the short term. Although not yet definitive, there are encouraging signs of improvement, for example the average distribution of wild bees has shown some stability over recent years. We are keeping these trends under review and continue to discuss all these issues with stakeholders, including with our advisory group under the National Pollinator Strategy.

## ■ Sewage: Rivers

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[62839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' oral contribution on 20 October 2021, Official Report, c. 843, whether he will publish the assessment behind the cost range of ending raw sewage discharges into rivers as cited by the Minister during that debate.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The age of our Victorian sewerage system means a complete elimination of discharges from storm overflows would be extremely challenging and initial assessments suggest it could cost over £150 billion according to the Storm Overflows Evidence Project, commissioned by the Storm Overflows Taskforce. The full research report will be published shortly.

## ■ Wetlands: Carbon Emissions

**Siobhan Baillie:**

[\[903881\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help ensure that coastal wetland habitat creation and other nature-based solutions form part of the Government's plans to reach net zero.

**Rebecca Pow:**

As stated in the Net Zero Strategy, nature-based solutions, including protecting, restoring and sustainably managing coastal wetlands, are key to tackling climate change and averting its impacts. We do not currently have the required data to include coastal wetlands habitats in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory, but we are working to address these evidence gaps. We are also championing nature-based solutions internationally, and supporting delivery through our Official Development Assistance, including International Climate Finance.

## ■ Zoos: Domestic Visits

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[59800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many visits to zoos have Ministers in his Department with responsibility for that area conducted in each the last three years.

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra Ministers have made two official visits to zoos in England in the last three years.



**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Afghanistan: Chevening Scholarships Programme****Kim Johnson:**[\[59109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to ensure the safe evacuation of the Afghan Chevening Scholars Alumni group.

**James Cleverly:**

Between 15 and 29 August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. Approximately 500 of these are special cases of particularly vulnerable Afghans, which includes Chevening scholars and their dependants. Throughout August and September, the Chevening Secretariat has been in regular contact with all Afghan Chevening scholars and their families in the UK, and has been liaising with universities, local authorities and the Home Office to help scholars access support.

The Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) was announced by the Home Office in August and will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. The ACRS is one of the most generous schemes in our country's history under which we will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans over the next year and up to a total of 20,000 in the coming years.

**■ Afghanistan: Economic Situation****Ruth Jones:**[\[60510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the economic situation in Afghanistan.

**James Cleverly:**

We are monitoring the situation in Afghanistan closely and are very concerned at the rapid economic contraction and the impact that this is having on the people of Afghanistan, as the cost of essential products rises and people struggle to withdraw funds. We have committed to provide £286 million in humanitarian and development support and continue to explore the best ways to provide support to the Afghan people through the UN and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

**■ Afghanistan: Females****Ruth Jones:**[\[60516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the safety of women and girls in Afghanistan.

**James Cleverly:**

We are committed to prioritising women and girls in the UK's response to the situation in Afghanistan and remain concerned about their safety. We are consulting women's organisations to understand how best to support their needs, in safety and with dignity. On 21 October, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South



Asia, UN and the Commonwealth, attended the annual Women, Peace and Security Open Debate at the UN Security Council and met prominent Afghan women to discuss how the UK can best support Afghan women and girls.

## ■ **Afghanistan: Refugees**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[58934]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with the Home Secretary on when the Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme will be operational.

**James Cleverly:**

The Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. The ACRS is one of the most generous schemes in our country's history under which we will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans over the next year and up to a total of 20,000 in the coming years. The scheme is not yet open and further details will be announced in due course by the Home Office. Further details on the scheme will be published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>

## ■ **Armed Conflict: Children**

**Fabian Hamilton:**

**[62611]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56589, on Armed Forces: Children, what specific diplomatic steps the Government is taking in respect of listed governments and armed groups to help prevent the unlawful recruitment or use of children in armed conflict.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK is an active member of the United Nations Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which leads the international response to violations committed against children in conflict. The UK applies diplomatic pressure to listed parties to enter into concrete UN action plans to prevent re-recruitment and ensure the provision of appropriate reintegration and rehabilitation assistance. We also press for the inclusion of child protection provisions in UN peacekeeping mandate renewals and resolutions.

The UK is also supporting the work of UNICEF in strengthening the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) - enhancing the safe and accurate collection of timely, objective, and reliable data, ensuring the MRM remains robust.

**■ Asia: Guided Weapons****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[62609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Japanese counterpart on the development of hypersonic missile technology in Asia.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is monitoring international developments in missile technology. We will continue to push for all countries to act responsibly in the international system.

The Foreign Secretary has discussed a range of defence and security issues with Foreign Minister Motegi, most recently on 22 September. We will continue to engage with our partners and allies on how we can collectively support the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

**■ Bangladesh: Hinduism****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[60490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has raised the matter of recent reported attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh with her Bangladeshi counterpart.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government is concerned about the recent violence at Hindu Durga Puja celebrations across various districts in Bangladesh. We engage with the Government of Bangladesh on the importance of freedom of religion or belief, which remains a priority for the UK Government. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister for South Asia, tweeted his concern on 21 October. The British High Commissioner to Bangladesh discussed the violence with Foreign Minister Momen on 26 October. On 19 October he also expressed his condolences to the victims of the violence and the UK's support for those working for religious tolerance and harmony in Bangladesh and around the world.

**■ Business: Human Rights****Stephen Farry:**[\[59123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government's commitment to implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, what steps the Government is taking to support a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.

**James Cleverly:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer of 25 October to question 58571.

## ■ China: Olympic Games

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[61049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether British Embassy staff in Beijing have been instructed not to attend (a) events promoting the Winter Olympics and (b) the Winter Olympics in 2022.

**Amanda Milling:**

As the Government has previously made clear, no decisions have yet been made about Government attendance at the Beijing Olympics in 2022.

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[61050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the resolution of the House on Beijing Winter Olympics and Chinese Government Sanctions, Official Report, column 609, 15 July 2021, when she plans to make a decision on a potential diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022.

**Amanda Milling:**

As the Government has previously made clear, no decisions have yet been made about Government attendance at the Beijing Olympics in 2022.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[62810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, in the context of the covid-19 vaccines donated to low income countries to date, how many and what proportion were due to expire within (a) one week, (b) two weeks, (c) three weeks and (d) four or more weeks from the date they were shipped from the UK.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK has committed to sharing 100 million doses by June 2022. 30 million of these will be donated by the end of 2021. To date, 10.6 million doses have been delivered to countries in need, and a further 10 million doses have been accepted by COVAX, to be delivered in the coming weeks.

For all bilateral donations, we have sought assurances from recipients that they have the capacity to roll out the quantity of doses offered in line with National Deployment and Vaccination Plans ahead of their expiry date. No UK donations have arrived with four weeks or less until their expiry date. We will always strive to donate with at least 2 months until expiry, as recommended by the World Health Organisation.

## ■ Developing Countries: Nutrition

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[62794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of reinstating funding for international nutrition programmes.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government is actively considering nutrition programming as part of its approach to the forthcoming Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit, including any new nutrition commitment, and will set out its approach following the conclusion of the Spending Review.

Tackling malnutrition remains a core focus of our work on global health, humanitarian response and in support of UK goals on girls' education and climate. It is critical for reducing preventable deaths and ensuring children get the best start in life in the poorest countries of the world.

**■ Eastern Europe: Rule of Law****Catherine West:**[\[62804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the challenges to the rule of law in parts of Eastern Europe; and what discussions she has had with her European counterparts on those challenges.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK advocates for reform in Eastern Europe, including on the rule of law, holding countries to their international commitments. We see a reformed judiciary and independent anti-corruption institutions as central to supporting rule of law and democratic accountability in Eastern Europe: vital not just to increase resilience against external aggression, but also to attract inward investment. Vested interests, often aligned with hostile state actors, often seek to undermine these reforms and institutions and are amongst the main challenges to strengthening rule of law.

We regularly discuss these issues at Ministerial level with European counterparts. FCDO officials also engage regularly on rule of law and other issues related to reform in Eastern Europe with our European partners through our engagement with international organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

With respect to Hungary and Poland in Central Europe, we are aware that a Polish court has ruled that aspects of EU law are incompatible with Poland's constitution, and that Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán has publicly stated his support for this ruling. This is a matter for the EU, its Member States and for the Governments of Poland and Hungary to resolve. It is for each country to decide on its constitutional arrangements but the UK expects alignment with relevant international norms.

**■ Ethiopia: Human Rights****Dan Carden:**[\[60500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to challenge human rights violations in Ethiopia.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are extremely concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia. Civilians must be protected and the violence must stop. The UK is supporting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigation into atrocities in Tigray, with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, is independent, transparent and impartial and holds the parties to this conflict directly responsible for their actions. It will issue its report on 1 November. We are also examining how we can best support institutions undertaking investigations into Human Rights abuses and violations. The Foreign Secretary, our Ambassador in Addis Ababa and I continue to raise human rights issues in our discussions with the Ethiopian Government and more broadly we have reminded all warring parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

**■ EU Countries: Asylum****Catherine West:**[\[62803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her counterparts in EU members on the treatment of asylum seekers on Europe's borders.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK co-operates closely with our European partners to manage migration and strengthen our collective borders. We strongly support the principle that asylum seekers are entitled to decent, humane, fair treatment. We welcome the fact that Frontex has conducted an internal investigation into the allegations of pushbacks, and that the European Parliament has established a permanent standing committee in order to scrutinise Frontex. FCDO engagement includes frequent Ministerial conversations; most recently, the Foreign Secretary reiterated our opposition to Belarus' use of migrants and refugees to increase pressure on neighbouring states, in a Joint Communique issued following a meeting with her Baltic counterparts on 11 October.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Jaguar Land Rover****Emily Thornberry:**[\[61126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many vehicles have been procured by FCDO Services from Jaguar Land Rover since 1 January 2020; how much those vehicles cost in total; and how many of those vehicles are powered by hybrid technology.

**Amanda Milling:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* Since 1 January 2020 FCDO Services has procured 53 vehicles from Jaguar Land Rover. The total cost of those vehicles is information held commercially in confidence. All procurement is published on crowncommercial.gov.uk. Of those vehicles, 23 have been Petrol Hybrid and 9 have been Battery Electric Vehicles.

## ■ Haiti: Earthquakes

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[62610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the (a) technical, (b) humanitarian and (c) medical assistance the Government is providing to Haiti following the August 2021 earthquake.

**Wendy Morton:**

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake the UK announced that £1 million of support was available for the response effort. This is in addition to our significant contributions to the UN, the Red Cross and the Start fund. A UK Emergency Medical Team completed its assessment mission of the needs caused by the earthquake, and the UK funded an expert to join the UN's Disaster Assessment and Coordination mission, conducting an initial assessment and coordinating the international response. 1,300 UK-funded shelter, hygiene and lighting kits were sent to Haiti from the UK and Panama. Support was also provided via the World Food Programme to ensure 15,000 families received assistance to buy food and other basic supplies. The UK has also provided funding to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), which is assisting with operations and coordination of earthquake response. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel Wave Knight was deployed offshore from Haiti until 29 August, supporting the US humanitarian response by serving as a landing pad for US helicopters. The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), of which the UK is a founding donor, has agreed a pay out of approximately \$40 million. We are clear our support has aided Haiti in a technical, humanitarian and medical capacity. We will continue to monitor the situation.

## ■ Iraq: Foreign Relations

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[59107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of (a) the implications for her policies of the recent parliamentary elections in Iraq and (b) relations between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Federal Government of Iraq.

**James Cleverly:**

We applaud the efforts of Prime Minister Kadhimi and the Iraqi electoral commission to run smooth elections with unprecedented support from the UN. The technical processes show a clear improvement on previous elections, and the lack of any major security incidents is testament to the hard work of the security forces. We look forward to working with the new Government of Iraq to deepen the UK-Iraq relationship and build a peaceful, prosperous Iraq that delivers for all its citizens.

We will continue to work closely with the UN and international partners to encourage a new Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to resolve their issues, including on a sustainable budget and disputed internal boundaries. Last year's agreement on Sinjar, which the UN supported, is a positive step in this regard.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary met the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, President Nechirvan Barzani, during his visit to London on 15-17 September and discussed the stability of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

**Feryal Clark:**

**[59108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to her counterparts in the (a) Kurdistan Regional Government and (b) Federal Government of Iraq on tackling corruption, promoting human rights and allowing freedom of expression.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK continues to speak out against human rights violations and abuses and support the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government to safeguard the human rights and freedoms of all Iraqis.

The former Foreign Secretary raised the importance of freedom of expression, human rights issues and anti-corruption with both the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government during his visit to Iraq in June. I [Minister Cleverly] will continue to raise the importance of tackling corruption, promoting human rights and allowing freedom of expression during my engagements with Iraqi political leaders. Our Ambassador in Baghdad, and our Consul General in Erbil, also regularly discuss these issues with their interlocutors in both governments.

## ■ Land Mines

**Hilary Benn:**

**[62604]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the Government (a) spent on mine action and mine clearance in each of the last three financial years and (b) plans to spend on mine action and mine clearance in each of the next three financial years.

**James Cleverly:**

From 2018 until 2020 the UK invested £124 million to help clear deadly explosive devices worldwide through the Global Mine Action Programme 2. In financial year 2018/19 we invested £28.8 million, in 2019/20 we invested £58.2 million and in 2020/21 we invested £37 million.

The Global Mine Action Programme 3 (GMAP3) is due to begin in 2022. It will involve landmine clearance and risk education to help affected communities keep safe, and capacity development for national authorities to help them manage their landmine contamination. We are working towards finalising funding and country allocation for GMAP3 for the next three years, as part of a broader effort to prioritise our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world.



**■ Mali: Russia****Jim Shannon:**[\[60418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to assist Mali in their relations with Russia.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK does not assist Mali in its relations with Russia. The UK is deeply concerned by the Malian Government's discussions with the Russian private military company, Wagner Group. In my statement of 29 September 2021, I made clear that Wagner Group is a driver of conflict in the areas it operates and has committed human rights abuses elsewhere on the continent. The UK supports the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in urging the Malian Government to reconsider their engagement with Wagner Group given the potential for further instability in the wider region. Together, with other partners active in the region, the UK is keeping the situation under close review.

**■ Myanmar: Armed Conflict****Alyn Smith:**[\[59961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her counterparts on the UN Security Council on the Burmese military troop build-up and increasing military attacks in Myanmar's Chin State, Sagaing Region and Magwe, North-Western Myanmar.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Chin, Sagaing and Magwe, particularly the significant troop movements by the Myanmar Armed Forces and reports of multiple civilian casualties. Current clashes have created mass displacement, with thousands of people now fleeing across the Indian border into Manipur and Mizoram state. This not only exacerbates the crisis in Myanmar but causes further regional instability. On 15 October, the British Embassy in Yangon released a statement urging the military to end their campaign of violence and flagging our concern for communities, their livelihoods, property and places of worship. We are monitoring developments closely and are in discussion with our international partners in the UN Security Council.

**■ Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[62608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to facilitate discussions with other nuclear armed states on a new international agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is fully committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The best way to achieve this is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated using a step-by-step approach, under the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation



Treaty (NPT). The Government is not discussing a new international agreement and intends to continue to make progress under the framework of the NPT. We look forward to the upcoming NPT Review Conference in January. The Government has regular dialogue with Nuclear Weapon States on nuclear issues through the P5 Process. This dialogue has included our respective nuclear doctrines, strategic risk reduction and increasing transparency.

## ■ **Oman: Riot Control Weapons**

**Kate Osamor:**

**[59900]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will assess whether (a) UK-made tear gas or (b) any other UK-made defence equipment has been used against protesters in Oman.

**James Cleverly:**

HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust export control regimes in the world. We consider all export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. Human rights considerations form a key part of these assessments. We will not grant a licence if there is a clear risk that the items might be used for internal repression.

## ■ **Palestinians: Education**

**Julie Elliott:**

**[59790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding the UK Government is providing for education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to (a) UNRWA and (b) the Palestinian Authority.

**Julie Elliott:**

**[59791]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding the Government is providing for health services in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to (a) United Nations Relief and Works Agency and (b) the Palestinian Authority.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* Budgets for 2020 were outlined in our Statistics in International Development report available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2020>. Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

**■ Palestinians: Non-governmental Organisations**

**Mr David Jones:** [\[62640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the order made by the Israeli Defence Ministry on 19 October 2021 declaring the NGOs Al-Haq, Addameer, Defence for Children International – Palestine, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees to be terrorist organisations; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr David Jones:** [\[62641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made, or plans to make, to the Israeli authorities in respect of the order of 19 October 2021 by the Israeli Defence Ministry declaring the NGOs Al-Haq, Addameer, Defence for Children International – Palestine, the Bisan Center for Research and Development, the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees to be terrorist organisations.

**James Cleverly:**

We are aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities and will be seeking additional information to understand the basis for the designations. Human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in the development of thriving, open societies.

**■ Palestinians: Security**

**Julie Elliott:** [\[59792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding the UK Government is providing for security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to (a) UNRWA and (b) the Palestinian Authority.

**James Cleverly:**

Budgets for 2020 were outlined in our Statistics in International Development report available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2020>. Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

**■ Palestinians: Third Sector**

**Tommy Sheppard:** [\[62754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the designation of six Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist by the Israeli government; and if she will make a statement.

**Tommy Sheppard:**

**[62756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what engagement her Department has had with the six Palestinian civil society organisations recently designated as terrorist by the Israeli Government; and whether she plans to engage with those groups in the future.

**James Cleverly:**

We are aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities and will be seeking additional information to understand the basis for the designations. Human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in the development of thriving, open societies.

**Tommy Sheppard:**

**[62755]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department plans to continue providing funding and support to Palestinian civil society organisations; and what programmes are available for applicants to gain access to support.

**James Cleverly:**

The Cabinet Office publishes Conflict Security and Stability Fund annual programme summaries on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-programme-summaries>. They outline the annual budget, a short summary of the programmes, and a breakdown of the projects in the programme. We will continue our support for peacebuilding projects in Financial Year 2021/2022 though exact spend figures are not yet available. Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

## ■ South Sudan: Children

**Harriett Baldwin:**

**[59780]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of reports that children in Warrap state in South Sudan were executed under the orders of the state governor in June 2021.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are deeply concerned by reports of extrajudicial executions in Warrap state in South Sudan. The UK will continue to urge the Government of South Sudan to tackle human rights violations and to implement their commitments to address these, including through implementation of the 2018 Peace Agreement. We did this most recently in our statement at the Human Rights Council session on 6 October where we also urged for the continuation of robust monitoring and reporting as part of understanding the scale of the challenge and need for international attention and support. The UK supports the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan's call for the Government of South Sudan to prevent extrajudicial executions and carry

out prompt, impartial, and independent investigations of all such acts in Warrap State, so the perpetrators can be held to account.

#### ■ Sudan: Overseas Aid

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[59779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help support the Sudanese people in response to the attempted coup in that country in September 2021.

**Vicky Ford:**

We strongly condemn the actions of the Sudanese military on 25 October to detain Prime Minister Hamdok and members of the civilian government, declare a state of emergency and unilaterally dissolve the transitional government. Over the past two years, the UK has taken a leading role to support Sudan on their delicate path from oppressive autocratic rule to freedom and democracy. The actions of the military represents a betrayal of the Sudanese people and their journey to democracy.

Prior to these recent events I spoke to Hamdok on 22 September to assure him of UK support to the civilian-led transition following the attempted coup of 21 September. I then had the opportunity to meet with Hamdok, General Burhan and other senior members of the government during my visit to Khartoum on 19/20 October. I urged all sides to work together and implement the Constitutional Declaration and Juba Peace Agreement in full; a message that still stands. We urge Sudan's military leadership to reverse their course, to release detained politicians, and to ensure Sudanese people can protest without fear of violence. The United Kingdom has, and will continue to be, a consistent and firm advocate for Sudan's transition to democracy.

#### ■ Sudan: Overseas Trade

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[59781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to encourage trade links between the UK and Sudan.

**Vicky Ford:**

We strongly condemn the actions of the Sudanese military on 25 October to detain Prime Minister Hamdok and members of the civilian government, declare a state of emergency and unilaterally dissolve the transitional government. Over the past two years, the UK has taken a leading role to support Sudan on their delicate path from oppressive autocratic rule to freedom and democracy. The actions of the military represents a betrayal of the Sudanese people and their journey to democracy. We urge Sudan's military leadership to reverse their course, to release detained politicians, and to ensure Sudanese people can protest without fear of violence. Economic recovery remains a vital part of delivering stability for Sudan and the transitional goals of the agreement made between all sides in 2019. During my recent visit to Khartoum I had the opportunity to discuss ways in which to improve the business environment and investment. I was also able to hear from Sudanese and

British business representatives about the important role businesses can play in the success of the transition. We will consider the future of such engagement in light of the actions of the Sudanese military this week.

## ■ Sudan: Politics and Government

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[61201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the political situation in Sudan.

**Vicky Ford:**

We strongly condemn the actions of the Sudanese military on 25 October to detain Prime Minister Hamdok and members of the civilian government and unilaterally dissolve the transitional government. The Head of the Armed Forces and de facto head of state General Burhan subsequently announced a state of emergency and declared a government composed of "independent patriotic competencies" would be appointed, while claiming to remain committed to the Juba Peace Agreement and deliver the democratic transition.

Over the past two years, the UK has taken a leading role to support Sudan on their delicate path from oppressive autocratic rule to freedom and democracy. Having arrested the Prime Minister and others, the military have undermined the trust placed in them to deliver democracy, by the international community, and more importantly, by the people of Sudan. The acts of the military represents a betrayal of the Sudanese people and their journey to democracy. Along with our international partners we urge Sudan's military leadership to reverse their course, to release detained politicians, and to ensure Sudanese people can protest without fear of violence.

## ■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[62799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2021 to Question 58973 on Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus, whether she is aware of any countries (a) who will not acknowledge that UK citizens who have received the vaccine produced at the Serum Institute of India are fully vaccinated for the purposes of international travel and (b) to which people who received the vaccine produced at the Serum Institute cannot currently travel.

**Amanda Milling:**

We are aware of no countries or territories with border requirements which differentiate between vaccines administered in the UK. Where there have been a few instances of confusion, they have been swiftly resolved. Border regulations remain the prerogative of the receiving country and travellers should always check FCDO Travel Advice to ensure they are familiar with entry restrictions - including any self-isolation or testing requirements - prior to travel.

## ■ Ukraine: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

**Catherine West:**

[\[62805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe is able to operate in eastern Ukraine.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK remains one of the largest contributors to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), which monitors and reports on the security situation in Ukraine. We regularly call on Russia to use its undeniable influence over the armed formations it backs to ensure that the SMM is granted full, safe and unimpeded access throughout non-government areas of eastern Ukraine, as well as Crimea and the Ukraine-Russia State border, in accordance with its mandate to monitor the entire territory of Ukraine.

The UK is clear that Russia should uphold the OSCE principles and commitments that it freely signed up to and which it is violating through its ongoing aggression against Ukraine. We continue to use UK statements at the OSCE to hold Russia to account for its actions and to call on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the Minsk agreements. During the G7 Leaders' Summit in June, we reiterated support for Ukraine, and affirmed that Russia is a party to and not a mediator in the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

## ■ Yemen: Humanitarian Situation

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[62808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

**James Cleverly:**

Around two-thirds of Yemenis - over 20 million people - require some form of humanitarian assistance. The crisis is exacerbated by severe food insecurity, a collapsing economy, the Covid-19 pandemic and the escalation of fighting in Marib. The UK has contributed over £1 billion of humanitarian assistance since the conflict began. Our pledge of £87 million for this financial year will feed an additional 240,000 of the most vulnerable Yemenis every month, support 400 healthcare clinics and provide clean water for 1.6 million people. We have also provided one-off cash support to 1.5 million of Yemen's poorest households. We continue to call on all parties to facilitate unhindered access for humanitarian actors and agencies and ensure that humanitarian workers are able to conduct their work safely.

We fully support the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Hans Grundberg, and urge the parties to engage constructively with this process and call on all states to release humanitarian funding commitments promptly. An inclusive political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis.

## ■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[59959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) political, (b) economic, (c) social and (d) security situation in Zimbabwe.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK remains concerned about the political situation in Zimbabwe, particularly the lack of accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations, and the restrictions to the right to freedom of assembly. The UK regularly urges the Zimbabwean Government to live up to their own constitution and ensure the opposition, civil society and journalists are allowed to operate without harassment. My predecessor most recently raised the human rights situation in Zimbabwe with Foreign Minister Shava on 9 June.

Following two years of recession the Zimbabwean economy is recovering in part due to improvements in macro-economic management. However, the economy still faces severe challenges and remains fragile, largely due to ongoing corruption and a failure to properly address problems with the exchange rate and subsidies. The social situation is concerning with 49% of the population estimated to be in extreme poverty in 2020. Zimbabwe has achieved one of the highest rates of COVID-19 vaccination coverage in Africa.

We welcome Zimbabwe's recent commitment to the 'Kenyatta Declaration' to spend 20% of their budget on education. We continue to monitor social and economic developments closely, encouraging the Government of Zimbabwe to improve economic policy and management, while protecting the poorest. The security situation remains stable.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Alcoholic Drinks: Children

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[57377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities on protecting children from alcohol marketing to support their health and wellbeing.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is a part of the Department on improving the nation's health and taking action on health disparities. This includes tackling alcohol-related health harms.

Officials within OHID continue to work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on its advertising policy to address concerns over promotions, advertising



and marketing relating to alcohol, particularly to ensure that children and young people are suitably protected.

■ **Cancer: Drugs**

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[56764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's process is for developing interim access arrangements for oncology drugs licensed through Project Orbis.

**Edward Argar:**

In view of the rapid approval of Project Orbis medicines, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have developed an interim process to support patient access to medicines between Project Orbis licensing approval and publication of NICE's guidance. It is anticipated that this will only be required in the short term. Consideration is given to:

- whether there is expected to be a gap of three months or longer between regulatory approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and publication by NICE of its final draft guidance;
- if there are any direct competitors expected to go through the NICE technology appraisal process within the next six months;
- if the treatment will make a fundamental, positive change to the existing treatment pathway; and
- whether the company will offer the medicine or treatment on a cost neutral basis.

■ **Carers: Discounts**

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[60411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of a carer verification system to help identify paid and unpaid carers so that they have greater access to discount schemes.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department has assessed the merits of a carer verification system for the paid workforce and further detail of this will be set out in the upcoming social care white paper.

We will ensure that unpaid carers have the support, advice and respite they need the Care Act 2014. We are working with stakeholders, including unpaid carers, to develop our plans and we will publish further detail in the white paper.



## ■ Children: Vaccination

**Steve Reed:**

[\[50668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the level of childhood immunisation services provided by local authorities in England.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* Local authorities do not have responsibility for the commissioning or operational delivery of childhood immunisation services. However, Directors of Public Health in local authorities have responsibility for the health and well-being of their populations and work closely with regional NHS England colleagues to ensure that immunisation services are of high quality and delivered effectively. Services are reviewed regularly by Directors of Public Health and Health and Well-being Boards with the UK Health Security Agency's national immunisation team.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[60448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if face coverings should be worn in Parliament.

**Maggie Throup:**

The wearing of face coverings in indoor settings is no longer a mandatory requirement. However, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Government expects and recommends people continue to wear face coverings in situations when they are likely to come into contact with people they do not normally meet, particularly in enclosed, crowded or poorly ventilated spaces. The Government's guidance on the use of face coverings enables people, including hon. Members and staff in Parliament, to make informed decisions about how to best manage the risk to themselves and others.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[60449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport about the potential merits of wearing face coverings on (a) buses (b) trains (c) trams (d) underground trains (e) other forms of public transport.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department remains in regular contact with the Department for Transport on COVID-19 measures.

The 'COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021' set out that if the data suggests the National Health Service is likely to come under unsustainable pressure, the Government would introduce measures in England to help control transmission of the virus, such as requiring people to wear face coverings in some settings. The exact settings will be announced should the measures be implemented.

## ■ Coronavirus: Schools

**Peter Kyle:** [\[62787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of new covid-19 infections identified since 1 September 2021 did NHS Test and Trace attribute to a school setting as being the most likely location of transmission.

**Maggie Throup:**

This information is not held in the format requested as it is not possible to identify where infection occurs in individual positive cases.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[41018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the risk assessment of the Innova SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Qualitative Test as announced by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency on 17 June 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

We are unable to publish the risk assessment requested as this is commercially sensitive. However, we are preparing to publish a summary of the assessment, which outlines the evidence considered and conclusions.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** [\[56284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to vaccinate home schooled children between the ages of 12 and 17 against covid-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* As of 23 August 2021, the Government met its target of offering a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to all 16 and 17 year-olds in England. This age group are vaccinated through the adult vaccination system. Anyone in this age group who has not yet been vaccinated can book an appointment at a vaccination centre using the online booking system or via a Walk in centres.

Those aged from 12 to 15 years old have been offered vaccination primarily through a schools-based programme. As with other school age vaccination programmes, arrangements are made locally to ensure that children outside mainstream educational provision are also offered vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccination programme has now expanded to allow parents or guardians to choose whether their child receives their dose in school or at a vaccination centre. The schools-based vaccination offer will continue in schools during the autumn. Parents and guardians can now book an appointment through the national booking system for the initial vaccine dose for all children aged between 12 to 15 years old including those who are home schooled.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[R] [\[58839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps a British national who received the covid-19 vaccination overseas must undertake to add their inoculation records to the NHS App.

**Maggie Throup:**

Since 30 September, a pilot has been in place for overseas vaccinations to be recorded on the National Immunisation Management System (NIMS) and the NHS COVID Pass. The Vaccine Data Resolution Service contacts patients with overseas vaccinations in their health records to attend a regional centre to present evidence of their vaccination and to receive any additional doses required.

The pilot initially involved three vaccination sites in England with more open since 11 October. By the end of October, there will be one site in every region in England offering this service. Currently any Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Janssen or Moderna vaccinations administered by the European Medicines Agency, the Food and Drug Administration or Swissmedic can be recorded on the NHS COVID Pass.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[59022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of when the effects of the covid-19 booster vaccination program will be seen in a decrease in the number of daily covid-19 infections.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency continuously monitors vaccine coverage and vaccine effectiveness. Early evidence on the effectiveness of booster doses is expected to emerge in the next few weeks.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[59023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the longevity of the (a) AstraZeneca and (b) Pfizer covid-19 vaccines; and whether that longevity will be a factor in their potential inclusion in a booster programme.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) continuously monitors vaccine effectiveness over time since the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines licensed for use in the United Kingdom. This includes Vaxzevria (previously AstraZeneca) and Comirnaty (previously Pfizer). The UKHSA observed limited waning in vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation and death more than 20 weeks post-vaccination with Vaxzevria or Comirnaty. This was evident in older adults and those in a clinical risk group, suggesting that these individuals should be prioritised for booster doses.

These analyses will continue as the booster programme deployment progresses, including monitoring the duration of protection of booster doses against a range of disease outcomes.

**Zarah Sultana:**

**[59083]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of needle aspiration when administering covid-19 vaccinations.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) provides guidance on immunisation techniques in Chapter Four of the Green Book, which follows available evidence and international recommendations for the administration of vaccines. This is reviewed and updated regularly by the UKHSA and states that it is not necessary to aspirate the syringe after the needle is introduced into the muscle because there are no large blood vessels at the recommended injection sites. The UKHSA has not made a specific assessment for COVID-19 vaccines.

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[59088]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make the covid-19 vaccine available to (a) children under the age of 12 and (b) children under the age of 12 who have conditions that make them vulnerable to covid-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

There is currently no COVID-19 vaccine authorised for use in the United Kingdom for those aged under 12 years old. Should the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency authorise a vaccine for those aged under 12 years old as safe and effective, then the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) would be asked for its clinical and scientific advice on prioritisation and deployment at population level. However, whether to vaccinate an individual is ultimately a decision for clinicians responsible for their care. Vaccination may be prescribed 'off label', including for a child, outside of the Chief Medical Officers' or the JCVI's advice using clinical judgement and an assessment of the patient's risk factors.

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[60520]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have received their third dose of a covid-19 vaccine; and if he will include that data in the Coronavirus Dashboard on the Government website.

**Maggie Throup:**

As of 24 October 2021, 5,235,928 people had received a COVID-19 booster vaccine in England.

Data on the third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine for all four United Kingdom nations is now included in the GOV.UK Coronavirus Dashboard at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

**Sir Desmond Swayne:**

[\[62563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to enable people who have received the Sinovac covid-19 vaccine to be recognised as fully vaccinated.

**Maggie Throup:**

We have no plans to do so at present.

We are taking a phased approach to inbound vaccination programmes in other countries and territories, building on the success of our pilot with the United States and Europe. Vaccine certification between countries and territories varies and certificates and apps must meet our minimum requirements. We will expand the policy to more countries and territories where it is safe to do so.

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

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[62745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department or Public Health England has a working relationship, including on contractual or commercial terms, with the Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI) or any of its subsidiaries.

**Edward Argar:**

Neither the Department nor the former Public Health England has any collaborative, commercial or contractual links to the Beijing Genomics Institute or its subsidiaries.

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

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[61062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department has allocated to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and for what projects.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is shown in the following table.

DATE/YEAR	PAYMENT DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT PAID INCLUDING VAT
1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016	Diversity Champions annual membership	£3,000
1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017	Diversity Champions annual membership	£3,000
25 October 2017	Fee for attending the Stonewall Workplace conference on 22 September 2017	£240
1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018	Diversity Champions annual membership	£3,000

DATE/YEAR	PAYMENT DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT PAID INCLUDING VAT
1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019	Diversity Champions annual membership	£3,000
1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020	Diversity Champions annual membership	£3,000

As of February 2021, the Department's membership with Stonewall has ended.

## ■ Diabetes: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[59828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether definitions used for clinically extremely vulnerable people or others asked to shield initially during the covid-19 outbreak included diabetes; and whether he has reviewed those definitions with regard to the inclusion of diabetes.

**Maggie Throup:**

The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers identified specific medical conditions that placed people at the greatest risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. It was determined that a blanket inclusion of everyone with a diagnosis of diabetes was not appropriate. As the shielding programme has now ended, there is no longer a centrally defined clinically extremely vulnerable group.

## ■ Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[62683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 10549, on Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services, when he plans to set a target on increasing access to children and young people's eating disorder services in 2022-23.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We remain committed to the access standard that 95% of children and young people with an eating disorder will receive treatment within one week for urgent cases and within four weeks for routine cases until 2023/24. To help meet this standard, we are investing £79 million extra in 2021/22 to expand children's mental health services, including allowing 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services and increasing the number of mental health support teams in schools and colleges from 59 to 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly three million children. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, an additional 345,000 children and young people will be able to access mental health services, including those for eating disorders by 2023/24.

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[62893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to allocating additional funding to NHS eating disorder services in 2022-23.

**Gillian Keegan:**

In 2022/23, £53 million has been allocated for children and young people's community eating disorder services. We are also planning to invest an additional £696 million in services for adults with severe mental illnesses, including care for people with eating disorders.

## ■ Elective Recovery Fund

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[56466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of Trusts to meet the Elective Recovery Fund thresholds in areas where covid-19 prevalence has been high.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* No formal assessment has been made. The Elective Recovery Fund thresholds are set against a baseline of pre-pandemic activity, from 2019-20. Systems are fully funded to deliver these baselines and are encouraged to increase their elective activity to pre-pandemic levels to access the additional funding.

## ■ Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Research

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[57455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adequate resources go to research into endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has funded or supported various studies into endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome. Since 2013, £8.4 million has been invested into endometriosis research and £3.9 million into polycystic ovary syndrome research. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome. While it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions, the NIHR's funding is available through open competition and we encourage researchers to submit applications in these areas.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[59897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing funding for research into (a) endometriosis and (b) polycystic ovary syndrome in England.



**Chris Elmore:**

[\[59917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase funding allocated to research into (a) endometriosis and (b) polycystic ovary syndrome.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 25 October 2021]:* The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has invested £8.4 million into endometriosis research and £3.9 million into polycystic ovary syndrome research. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome. While it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions, the NIHR's funding is available through open competition and we encourage researchers to submit applications in these areas.

## ■ Endometriosis: Research

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[57320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department is providing to research into endometriosis diagnosis and treatment in (a) 2021-22 and (b) each of the next three financial years.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has invested £8.4 million into diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis since 2013. While it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions, including for future financial years, the NIHR's funding is available through open competition for research into endometriosis diagnosis and treatment and we encourage researchers to submit applications in these areas.

## ■ Fampridine

**Ruth Edwards:**

[\[56497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment has made of the potential merits of using fampridine for the treatment of multiple sclerosis.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department has made no assessment. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service on whether medicines represent a clinical and cost-effective use of resources.

NICE was unable to recommend fampridine as an effective use of resources in its clinical guideline on managing multiple sclerosis. However, NICE is now updating this guideline, which will include reviewing the recommendation on fampridine. NICE expects to publish its draft guidance on the management of multiple sclerosis for consultation in December this year, with final guidance expected on 1 June 2022.



**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[56737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the potential cost savings for (a) social care and (b) welfare of making fampridine (fampyra) routinely available on the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department has made no assessment. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service. In developing its recommendations, NICE takes account of all health and publicly funded social care costs and benefits. It does not routinely consider wider societal costs such as the impact on welfare spending.

## ■ General Practitioners

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[57491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the spread of misinformation on GP surgeries refusing to see patients.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* General practice has remained open throughout the pandemic, offering face to face appointments in addition to telephone and online consultations.

On 14 October we announced a plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice. NHS England and NHS Improvement will work with professional bodies and patient groups to develop communications tools to help patients understand how they can access the care they need in general practice.

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[58870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that GP's return to face-to-face appointments with patients.

**Maria Caulfield:**

On 14 October we published a plan to support general practitioners (GPs) and assist patients to see or speak to GPs and their teams. The £250 million Winter Access Fund will help patients with urgent care needs to see their GP on the same day, taking account of their preferences.

The National Health Service has been clear that GP practices must provide face to face appointments, alongside remote consultations. In August, more than half of all appointments were face to face.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[59724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help GPs reduce the backlog of patient appointments.

**Maria Caulfield:**

On 14 October the Department and NHS England announced a new £250 million Winter Access Fund to assist patients with urgent care needs, with a focus on increasing capacity to boost urgent same-day care and taking account of patient preferences. We have also committed to create an extra 50 million appointments a year by increasing and diversifying the workforce. This will mean improved access to general practice for patients and more support for staff to provide a wider range of care options for patients outside of hospital.

NHS England and Health Education England are working with the profession to increase the size of the general practice workforce in England. This includes measures to boost recruitment, address the reasons why doctors are leaving the profession, and encourage them to return to practice.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[61134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of (a) GPs per capita and (b) GP working hours per capita for each hospital Trust in England.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not collected centrally, as general practice workforce data is not available by hospital trust.

**■ General Practitioners: Blackpool North and Cleveleys****Paul Maynard:**[\[61136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average list size of patients is per full-time equivalent GP in Blackpool North and Cleveleys constituency in each of the last five years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The information requested is not held centrally, as general practice workforce data is not collected by constituency.

**■ General Practitioners: Location****Kate Hollern:**[\[56522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take steps to incentivise new and existing GPs to locate in areas of high deprivation with the lowest numbers of GPs per patient.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The Department continues to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to consider the best ways to tackle health inequalities within primary care, and to address variation in access to general practice. Since 2016, the Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme has attracted hundreds of doctors to train in hard to recruit areas by providing a one-off financial incentive of £20,000. In 2021, there are 500 places available.

## ■ General Practitioners: Working Hours

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[59994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that GP pension rules are not a barrier to GPs working additional hours to provide out of hours care and help the NHS recover from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS Pension Scheme members who reach the £1.073 million lifetime allowance for tax-free saving will have accrued an annual pension of around £46,000 per year and tax-free lump sum of around £139,000. The Government addressed the annual allowance taper issue in March 2020 by increasing thresholds by £90,000, removing all staff with earnings below £200,000 from its scope. This removes the disincentive of taking on additional work, with an estimated 96% of general practitioners now out of scope of the taper based on their National Health Service earnings. Pension tax should not impact on take home pay.

## ■ Genetic Engineering

**Chris Green:**

[\[59821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many gene and cell therapies have been appraised by NICE through a Single Technology Appraisal; and what category of recommendation made in each of those cases was (a) recommended, (b) optimised, (c) Cancer Drugs Fund, (d) not recommended and (e) only in research.

**Edward Argar:**

As of October 2021, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published technology appraisals guidance on seven gene and cell therapies. The following table shows NICE's recommendation for each cell and gene therapy.

TECHNOLOGY	CATEGORISATION
Talimogene laherparepvec	Optimised
Holoclar (ex vivo expanded autologous human corneal epithelial cells containing stem cells)	Optimised
Holoclar (ex vivo expanded autologous human corneal epithelial cells containing stem cells)	Only in Research

TECHNOLOGY	CATEGORISATION
Autologous chondrocyte implantation using chondrosphere	Optimised
Tisagenlecleucel	Recommended (Cancer Drugs Fund)
Darvadstrocel	Not recommended
Axicabtagene ciloleucel	Recommended (Cancer Drugs Fund)
Tisagenlecleucel	Recommended (Cancer Drugs Fund)

#### ■ Gina Coladangelo

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:** [\[35490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what role former non-executive director Gina Colangelo played in the G7 Health Minister's meeting in June 2021.

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:** [\[35491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse was of Gina Colangelo's (a) travel, (b) subsistence and (c) other expenses claimed by Gina Colangelo for the G7 Health Minister's meeting in June 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 22 July 2021]:* Ms Coladangelo attended the G7 Health Minister's meeting as a part of the UK delegation.

All travel and subsistence costs were covered as part of the Department's overall booking. Ms Coladangelo did not claim any additional expenses.

#### ■ Government Departments: Procurement

**Alex Sobel:** [\[60505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether tax paid into the UK is a consideration when awarding Government contracts.

**Edward Argar:**

The Public Contract Regulations 2015 introduced an obligation for public bodies to exclude suppliers from a procurement where the supplier has been found guilty of breaching its obligations in relation to payment of taxes and this has been established by a judicial or administrative decision. Central procurement policy requires any business bidding for central Government contracts over £5 million to self-certify

whether there have been any occasions of non-compliance with regard to their tax obligations. The aim of the procurement policy is to promote tax compliance. Suppliers that engage in non-compliant activity risk losing access to larger Government contracts.

Many businesses, including those delivering Government contracts, operate on an international basis and parts of those businesses will be operating in countries outside of the United Kingdom. Their tax liability will be subject to the rules of the tax jurisdiction in which they are operating.

## ■ **Health Professions: Termination of Employment**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[59753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many full time equivalent (a) GPs, (b) nurses and (c) other direct patient care staff have left the NHS and not been replaced since (i) September 2020 and (b) March 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

The data requested is not collected.

## ■ **Health Services: Prisoners**

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[60382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Injustice? Towards a better understanding of health care access challenges for prisoners, published by Nuffield Trust on 21 October 2021, what recent discussions he has had with Ministerial colleagues in the Ministry of Justice on the impact on health and social care services and budgets in England of (a) prisoner missed appointments, (b) high rates of injuries and (c) high rates of poisoning among prisoners.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice meet regularly to discuss health services for people in prison. Officials from both Departments continue to work together to improve healthcare services and outcomes for all people in custody.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[60383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Injustice? Towards a better understanding of health care access challenges for prisoners, published by Nuffield Trust on 21 October 2021, if he will make a statement on progress in health care for prisoners made since the publication of Locked out? Prisoners' use of hospital care by the Nuffield Trust on 26 February 2020.

**Gillian Keegan:**

As a signatory to the National Partnership Agreement for Prison Healthcare, the Department is committed to working with the Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service, NHS England and NHS Improvement and the UK Health Security

Agency to ensure safe, legal, and effective care that improves health outcomes and reduces health inequalities for prisoners.

■ **Healthy Start Scheme**

**Afzal Khan:** [\[62837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Healthy Start voucher scheme applications will be made available in languages other than English.

**Maggie Throup:**

The NHS Business Services Authority are digitising the Healthy Start scheme, on behalf of the Department, to facilitate families to apply for and use the scheme. Once digitised, the NHS Business Services Authority will provide access to a translation service, as needed.

■ **Healthy Start Scheme: Migrants**

**Afzal Khan:** [\[62834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to begin granting Health Start vouchers to families subject to no recourse to public funds.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[62836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the backlog in the Healthy Start scheme to ensure newly eligible families subject to no recourse to public funds can access support.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department has recently agreed to temporarily extend the Healthy Start scheme to British children aged under four years old whose parent/guardian meet the financial eligibility criteria and are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status.

Those who believe they qualify for the temporary extension must submit a completed application form with supporting documents that demonstrate they meet all the eligibility criteria.

There is no backlog in the Healthy Start scheme. The Department is supporting all individuals and third-party organisations making enquiries regarding this temporary extension by providing a bespoke application form and application guidance document.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[62835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will develop a separate Healthy Start Scheme application form for newly eligible families subject to no recourse to public funds.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department has a separate Healthy Start Application Form and Application Guidance Document for those who meet the temporary extension criteria.

## ■ Hereditary Angioedema

**Jim Shannon:**

[60415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of hereditary angioedema on affected people's time away from (a) work and (b) education.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No specific assessment has been made.

## ■ Hereditary Angioedema: Health Services

**Jim Shannon:**

[60416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps (a) NICE and (b) NHS England are taking to help ensure that the treatment and care of people living in the UK with hereditary angioedema adhere to international best practice guidelines.

**Maria Caulfield:**

While the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has not published a guideline on hereditary angioedema its clinical knowledge summary on angioedema and anaphylaxis is available at the following link:

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/angio-oedema-anaphylaxis/>

This summary is a source of information for health professionals working in primary care, providing recommendations on the recognition and management of hereditary angioedema.

NHS England's '2013/14 NHS Standard Contract for Specialised Allergy Services (All Ages)' specifies that centres provide equity of access to best practice standards, based on current national and international guidelines, for diagnosis and management for patients with hereditary angioedema (HAE). In addition, centres are expected to collaborate with other expert centres at national and international level. NHS England's Immunology and Allergy Clinical Reference Group are also revising and updating its current commissioning policies.

## ■ Hospital Beds

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[61133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of NHS hospital beds per capita for each hospital Trust in England.

**Edward Argar:**

This data is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Hospitals: Discharges

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[58878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when publication of NHS statistics on Delayed Transfers of Care will resume.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2021]:* The decision on reinstating the delayed transfer of care data collection is being reviewed by the Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement.

■ **Hospitals: Food****Caroline Dinénage:**[\[60395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hospitals offer food to parents in hospital with their child.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is not collected centrally.

■ **Hyperactivity: Mental Health Services****Kim Leadbeater:**[\[61237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure equitable access to ADHD (a) support, (b) assessments and (c) diagnosis for children and adults across England.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Clinical commissioning groups and National Health Service trusts should have due regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guideline: 'Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management'. This guideline aims to improve the diagnosis of ADHD, the quality of care and support that people receive. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to working with local authority children's social care, education services and expert charities to support neurodivergent children, including children with ADHD and their families throughout the diagnostic process. Five year funding allocations are conditional on improving these services in line with the Long Term Plan targets.

■ **Infectious Diseases****Rachael Maskell:**[\[59860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the likelihood of a rise in (a) community acquired pneumonia and (b) hospital acquired infections this winter.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has not made an assessment of potential community-acquired pneumonia this winter.

Whilst UKHSA has not made projections of hospital-onset infections for winter 2021/22, routinely monitors and reports healthcare-associated infection in the general population and co/secondary infections in COVID-19 patients.



**Rachael Maskell:**

[59862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish regular data on hospital admissions for all communicable infections for the purposes of increasing awareness of pressures on (a) the NHS and (b) local hospitals over winter 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

Data on hospital admissions for all communicable infections is not held centrally and there are no current plans to publish such data.

#### ■ **Infectious Diseases: Disease Control**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[59861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what further steps he is taking to encourage better (a) ventilation, (b) hygiene (c) social distancing and (d) face covering compliance to reduce the risk of transmission for all communicable diseases.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) supports Government departments to produce evidence-informed guidance to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, including guidance for the public on the ventilation of indoor spaces, social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings. Many of the actions to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 will also help to reduce the spread of other communicable infections in the community, such as influenza and norovirus.

In addition, the UKHSA's e-Bug resource for children and teachers includes general advice on hygiene, infections and antibiotics. The resource has been updated with advice about COVID-19, including ventilation and hygiene and is available at the following link:

<https://www.e-bug.eu/index.php?name=UK-global-teacher-homepage>

The 'Infectious Diseases Strategy 2020-2025' provides a holistic strategy of infections including strategic priorities to reduce the risk of and burden from all infectious diseases including vaccine-preventable infections and infections of pandemic potential, and brings them together into a single strategic framework. The Infections Diseases Strategy 2020-2025 is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-infectious-diseases-strategy>

#### ■ **Influenza: Disease Control**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[62622]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what measures his Department is considering other than vaccination to help mitigate a winter flu outbreak in winter 2021-22.

**Maggie Throup:**

The National Health Service continues to recommend hand washing, using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes and using a bin to catch tissues as quickly as possible to help reduce the risk of flu. However, influenza vaccination remains a cost-effective measure to protect those at risk and reduce hospitalisations.

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[62623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what planning his Department has undertaken to reduce flu transmissions in the community in winter 2021-22.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department has planned for over 35 million people to be offered a free flu vaccine during the upcoming winter season. We have also secured a central stock of flu vaccines in addition to local supplies.

We have expanded the children's vaccination programme to include secondary school children up to year 11, to protect children and prevent onward transmission to vulnerable members of the community.

We have launched a marketing campaign encouraging eligible cohorts to book their flu vaccine. NHS England and NHS Improvement have recommissioned the national call and recall service to target groups of eligible individuals, informing them of their flu vaccination eligibility and remind them to make an appointment.

**■ Influenza: Vaccination****Rachael Maskell:**[\[59857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the efficacy level has been of the flu vaccine since 1 January 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

Vaccine effectiveness varies between seasons and is dependent on the strains in circulation. Due to extremely low levels of circulating influenza during the 2020 to 2021 season, certain aspects of surveillance were not possible, including virus characterisation and vaccine effectiveness estimates.

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[59859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional steps he is taking to help ensure the reduction of flu transmission following the reduced flu vaccine uptake for this time of year among people over 50.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department has offered a free flu vaccine for those over 50 years old to protect those more at risk during the winter. We have extended vaccination in schools to also include all secondary school years 8 to 11 to prevent onward transmission to older members of the community.

This year's marketing campaign encourages those over 50 years old to book their flu vaccine without delay. Advertising includes terrestrial television, video on demand and radio across a nine-week schedule, digital and social media channels, activities aimed at multicultural groups, stakeholder partnerships and paid for public relations.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also recommissioned the national call and recall service to supplement local mechanisms to invite those aged over 50 years old to book their vaccination appointment.

#### ■ **IVF and Maternity Services: LGBT People**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[59986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS England on ensuring equal access to IVF and maternity services for lesbian and bi women.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are in regular contact with NHS England to discuss a range of health and care issues, including maternity and fertility services.

#### ■ **Kidney Diseases: Health Services**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[62568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to ask Integrated Care Systems (ICS) to include chronic kidney disease in their ICS plans; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

There are currently no plans to ask integrated care systems to specifically include chronic kidney disease in their plans. However, both integrated care board and integrated care partnerships' plans and strategies should consider the health needs of the population they serve, which can include care for chronic kidney disease.

#### ■ **Life Expectancy**

**Damian Green:** [\[59701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to meet the Government's target to provide five extra years of healthy life for UK citizens by 2035; and if he will make a statement.

**Damian Green:** [\[59702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the progress made on the Government's commitment to five extra years of healthy life for UK citizens by 2035.

**Maggie Throup:**

We regularly review progress against a range of important indicators including life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

We have already taken a range of actions including implementing an ambitious obesity strategy, supporting interventions to reduce smoking and investing in improving access to health services across the country. On 1 October we launched the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) work in partnership with national and local government, the National Health Service, the voluntary sector, industry and the wider public health system to improve in health outcomes and disparities. The OHID will continue publishing the Productive Healthy Ageing profile providing data on a range of indicators including healthy life expectancy and will monitor the commitment to five extra years of healthy life for United Kingdom citizens by 2035.

### ■ Long Covid

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people with long covid; and what assessment he has made of the level of demand among people with long covid for (a) clinical support and (b) rehabilitation.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The latest prevalence data for 'long' COVID-19 published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimated that 1.1 million people living in private households in the United Kingdom were experiencing self-reported symptoms as at 5 September 2021. However, it should be noted that not everyone with persistent symptoms will need access to health care. NHS England and NHS Improvement have provisionally estimated that approximately 2.9% of people will need NHS support. NHS England and NHS Improvement have estimated that approximately 30% to 50% of patients could be appropriate for supported self-management, 18% to 30% could be treated in primary and community care and 20% to 50% through specialist services and rehabilitation pathways.

### ■ Long Covid: Children

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of long covid in children; and what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 infection on lung health.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The latest prevalence data for 'long' COVID-19 published by the Office for National Statistics estimated that 18,000 children aged two to 11 years old and 35,000 children aged 12 to 16 years old were experiencing self-reported 'long' COVID-19 symptoms as at 5 September 2021.

COVID-19 is a new disease and therefore it is not yet clear what the physical, neurological, psychological and rehabilitation needs will be for those experiencing the

long-term effects of the virus, including lung health. The Government has invested £50 million in research to help build our understanding of 'long' COVID-19.

### ■ Long Covid: Health Services

**Layla Moran:**

[\[62827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether treatments for long covid will be exempt from the NHS Charging Regulations; how many people considered not ordinarily resident for the purposes of NHS charging have accessed long covid services; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

Under the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015, no charge can be made to an overseas visitor for the diagnosis or, if positive, treatment of COVID-19. However, this exemption does not cover hospital treatment of any secondary or subsequent illnesses which arise from the initial COVID-19 infection, including 'long' COVID-19. Healthcare providers have a duty to assess what treatment for COVID-19 is exempt or chargeable, based on the views of clinicians. Data on the number of overseas visitors seeking access to services in relation to treatment of 'long' COVID-19 is not held centrally.

### ■ Lung Diseases: Research

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[57382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse is of (a) research and (b) trials in respect of pulmonary fibrosis.

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[57383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken (a) research and (b) trials to investigate whether treatments for covid-19 can be used for pulmonary fibrosis.

**Edward Argar:**

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the nation's largest funder of health and social care research. In 2020/21 it awarded £696,932 for research into pulmonary fibrosis. Currently, the NIHR supports 122 studies into pulmonary fibrosis with two current COVID-19 related studies. One study is evaluating the safety and efficacy of Deupirfenidone in post-acute COVID-19 respiratory disease. The second is evaluating the efficacy and safety of Remdesivir treatment of COVID-19 in an outpatient setting.

### ■ Medical Treatments: Side Effects

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[56870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 22 July 2021 to Question 33177, on Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, whether a decision has been made on the mandatory reporting of adverse events.

**Edward Argar:**

A decision has not yet been made. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency continues to investigate the matter with the intention of making proposals by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.

**■ Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency: Correspondence****Justin Madders:**[\[58923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency plans to respond to the correspondence of 30 June 2021 from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston regarding the extension given for Innova lateral flow tests.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2021]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency responded to the hon. Member on 1 September 2021.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Sir Mike Penning:**[\[56181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 21 May 2021 from the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead on the legality of discharging an elderly patient to a care home without first advising the family who hold a Power of Attorney for Health, reference MP69387.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* We replied to the hon. Member on 21 October 2021.

**Sir Mike Penning:**[\[56876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply in detail to correspondence from the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead of 17 June and 18 May case number MP69421 on reactions to Covid Vaccine and Tinnitus.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* We replied to the hon. Member on 20 October 2021.

**Feryal Clark:**[\[57444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence dated 9 August 2021 from the Hon. Member for Enfield North on the Coronavirus notification system on the NHS Covid-19 app, reference FC9962.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 20 October 2021.

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[61127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will respond to a letter dated 13 August 2021 from the Honourable Member for West Lancashire, reference ZA57374 regarding a COVID passport error.

**Edward Argar:**

We replied to the hon. Member on 26 October 2021.

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

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[61235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has any plans to introduce a waiting list target for CAMHS referral and assessment.

**Gillian Keegan:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have consulted on the potential to introduce five new waiting time standards, which includes children, young people and their families/carers presenting to community-based mental health services receive care within four weeks from referral. This consultation closed on 1 September 2021 and NHS England and NHS Improvement are analysing the responses to inform a recommendation to the Government.

The National Health Service is also piloting the four week waiting time for access to specialist mental health treatment for children and young people. The pilots in 12 areas of England inform a recommendation on the potential development of access and waiting-time standards for all children and young people who need specialist mental health services.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Nurses**

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[60486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health nurses are currently in training.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department does not hold this information.

## ■ **Mental Health: Research**

**Sir George Howarth:**

[\[56563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase funding for research into mental health.

**Paul Girvan:**

[\[57265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase funding for mental health research.



**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[58358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase mental health research spending.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the largest funder of mental health research in the United Kingdom. In 2019-20, the NIHR spent £93.4 million on mental health research, which is a significant year on year increase in investment in mental health. While it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions, the NIHR's funding is available through open competition and we encourage researchers to submit applications in this area.

## ■ Midwives: Training

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**[\[56376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many pre-registration student midwives (a) have started their training and (b) were at any stage of their training in each of the last five academic years for which figures are available.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The Department does not hold information on the number of midwives in any stage of training. The following table shows the number of student acceptances to midwifery courses in England. Acceptances are a widely used proxy for the number of students who start training each year.

ACADEMIC YEAR	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-2021
Number of acceptances	2,395	2,600	2,680	3,105	3,630

Source: The Universities and Colleges Admission Service end of cycle data, 2020

## ■ NHS 111: Pay

**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[59829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that NHS 111 call handlers who are employed by private contractors receive a comparable rate of pay to NHS 111 call handlers who are directly employed by the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

Private providers determine the rates of pay for their staff according to their employment contracts and local conditions. However, some contractors may choose to mirror arrangements used in the National Health Service, including annual pay awards.

## ■ NHS: Abuse

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[59756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of abuse experienced by (a) GPs and their staff, (b) staff in hospitals and (c) emergency workers; what steps he is taking to fulfil the Government's commitment to work with organisations representing GPs and other health care organisations and staff on a national campaign to stop abuse of the NHS workforce; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

No recent assessment has been made. However, action is being taken to protect and support staff through the national NHS Violence Reduction Programme, which includes improved training for staff to deal with violence and prompt mental health support for staff who have been victims of violence. On 14 October we announced that the Department and NHS England will work with trades unions and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges to launch a zero tolerance campaign on abuse of National Health Service staff.

## ■ Palliative Care: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of palliative care.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the amount of available funding for palliative care.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of funding allocated to palliative care is provided by (a) the public purse and (b) charitable donations.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of palliative care beds.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the extent of hospice at home services.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Information on the funding for palliative care these services is not held centrally as clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for the planning and commissioning of high-quality, cost-effective services that meet the needs of their local population. Any assessment regarding the adequacy and availability of services,

including palliative care beds and hospice at home services would therefore be made locally.

The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement regularly engage with the whole sector to understand the issues they face and upcoming needs and challenges. In 2020/21 in total an additional £257 million has been allocated to hospices in England as part of the COVID-19 response.

To support local commissioners, NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed seven palliative and end of life care strategic clinical networks, working with integrated care systems. This includes the development of service specifications and an investment framework.

### ■ **Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Veterans**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[62732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the Ministry of Defence on increasing the availability of eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing treatment for veterans suffering with post traumatic stress disorder.

**Gillian Keegan:**

There have been no specific discussions.

However, veterans in England can access mental health support through Op COURAGE: the veterans mental health and wellbeing service, through 12 lead providers. The Complex Treatment Service within Op COURAGE provides veterans with evidence-based trauma focussed treatment to address their mental health needs. Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder may also access services such as those provided by community mental health teams and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services.

### ■ **Pregnancy: Coronavirus**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[60412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent assessment of the impact of covid-19 on pregnant women; and if he will make a statement on pregnancy and the covid-19 vaccine.

**Maggie Throup:**

There is growing evidence that if pregnant women become infected with COVID-19, they may be at increased risk of severe illness compared with non-pregnant women, particularly in the third trimester.

Vaccination in pregnancy against COVID-19 is strongly recommended. On 16 April 2021, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that women who are pregnant should be offered COVID-19 vaccination at the same time as non-pregnant women, based on their age and clinical risk group. All adults aged 18 years old and over, including those who are pregnant, have been offered two

doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. The JCVI will continue to keep their advice on pregnancy and COVID-19 vaccination under review as more evidence emerges.

## ■ Prescription Drugs

**Julian Sturdy:**

**[57009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to minimise the wastage of prescribed tablets and other medication.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's programme on medicines optimisation includes improving the use of medicines and reducing wastage and aims to help patients to improve their outcomes; take their medicines as intended; avoid taking unnecessary medicines; reduce wastage of medicines; and improve medicines safety. Reducing waste medicines is also a focus for the National Health Service environmental programme 'Delivering a net zero NHS'.

In addition, the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England has completed a review on overprescribing, which was published on 22 September 2021. The review sets out a series of further practical and cultural changes necessary to ensure patients get the most appropriate treatment for their needs while ensuring clinicians' time is well-used and taxpayer money is spent wisely.

**Julian Sturdy:**

**[57010]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what procedures are in place in NHS hospitals in England for the (a) retention or (b) reissue of prescribed medications for inpatients on their discharge from a hospital stay; how those medications' retention or reissue procedures compare with those followed in private hospitals; and what estimate his Department has made of the potential for NHS cost savings where inpatients retain their prescribed medications upon discharge.

**Edward Argar:**

National Health Service hospitals in England have procedures in place which recognise that retention and reissue of a patient's own routine medicines, following a review, allows patients to continue with their familiar regime in their home or from their community pharmacy and reduces discharge delays and adverse incidents. Additional clinically urgent medicines, prescribed during the stay, are supplied by the hospital.

Other procedures include dispensing for discharge at the start of a stay, full dispensing of all medicines needed at discharge or, for short episodes where no changes are made to the patient's medicine regime, no supply. The new Community Pharmacy Discharge Medicines Service can support patients requiring on-going support with their medicines needs after discharge.

All hospitals, whether NHS or private, are subject to the same regulatory standards, overseen by the Care Quality Commission. We have made no estimate of the

potential for NHS cost savings of inpatients retaining their prescribed medications upon discharge.

## ■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[58359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposals to align prescription charges with the State Pension age on people who currently pay for their medication until the age of 60 and who are diagnosed with (a) Parkinson's, (b) HIV, (c) asthma, (d) heart disease, (e) liver disease, (f) inflammatory bowel disease and (g) other long term conditions; on what date he will publish the outcome of the Government consultation on Aligning the upper age for NHS prescription charge exemptions with the State Pension age; if he will make it his policy to maintain free prescriptions for over 60s; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

No assessment has been made. However, the impact assessment published alongside the consultation discusses the potential impacts of the change on people who have disabilities and long term conditions, which are not listed as medical exemptions from prescription charges, using three examples of long term conditions: inflammatory bowel disease, Parkinson's Disease and asthma. The impact assessment can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/aligning-the-upper-age-for-nhs-prescription-charge-exemptions-with-the-state-pension-age>

The responses to the consultation are currently being considered. No decisions on the proposals have yet been taken, including prescriptions for those aged over 60 years old. The Government's response will be published in due course.

## ■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Inspections

**Jess Phillips:**

**[56149]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what inspection regime is planned of sites where patients sectioned under the Mental Health Act 1983 are housed where they are not inspected by the Care Quality Commission.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* Detentions for treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983 must take place in hospital and as such are inspected by the Care Quality Commission. Persons may exceptionally be subject to short-term holding powers elsewhere, for example in police stations, which are inspected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

## ■ Smoking

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[60346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to a report by ASH entitled Use of e-cigarettes, vapes, among adults in Great Britain, published in June 2021, what steps his Department is taking to help reach the target of making England smoke-free by 2030 given that 51 per cent of remaining smokers have stopped using e-cigarettes.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will continue to provide information, advice and support related to the benefits of using e-cigarettes as a tool for smoking cessation. We will continue to communicate this through local stop smoking services and campaigns. The Department is considering a range of innovative policy and regulatory changes to achieve our ambition to be smoke-free by 2030. This will be set out in our new Tobacco Control Plan, which we will publish in due course.

## ■ Smoking: Norway

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[60345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of how Norway has halved its rate of smoking from 2 per cent to 1 per cent in 2020 among 18-24 year olds; and if he will make a statement.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Department continues to monitor developments in tobacco use across the world. Whilst smoking rates have decreased amongst those aged 16 to 24 years old in Norway, overall levels of tobacco use have remained stable. Evidence shows that the consumption of any tobacco product is harmful. We continue to promote the use of nicotine replacement therapy and e-cigarettes as a way to quit smoking.

## ■ Smoking: Young People

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[62730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of recent trends in smoking among young people in England; and what steps he is taking to reduce smoking prevalence in young people.

**Maggie Throup:**

Updated figures for the under 15 years old age range will be published in 2022.

The new Tobacco Control Plan will outline plans to protect young people from the harms of smoking in support of our ambition to be smoke-free by 2030.

## ■ Social Services: Recruitment

**Kim Johnson:** [\[59990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support the Government is providing to local authorities to help with recruitment to the adult social care sector.

**Gillian Keegan:**

On 21 October 2021, the Department announced a new £162.5 million workforce recruitment and retention fund to support local authorities working with providers to recruit and retain staff this winter. Our next national recruitment campaign for adult social care will be launched in early November and we are also working alongside Department for Work and Pensions to promote adult social care careers in job centres.

## ■ Speech and Language Disorders

**Geraint Davies:** [\[56742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS England has plans to update the conditions section of its website to include developmental language disorder as a specific condition.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* Due to the significantly increased demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS Digital has paused the creation of new content on NHS.UK. However, NHS Digital will consider an update to this section in relation to user needs, clinical and policy guidance and resources before making its decision.

## ■ Spinal Muscular Atrophy: Screening

**Felicity Buchan:** [\[61228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the evidence to support newborn screening for spinal muscular atrophy.

**Maggie Throup:**

In 2018, the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) looked at the evidence for screening for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) in newborns and recommended that a population screening programme should not be introduced. The new treatment of nusinersen is still in the early stages and long-term effects to improve symptoms in children with SMA are unknown. The UK NSC is due to review its recommendation in 2021/22 and is actively engaged in discussions with stakeholders.

## ■ Stem Cells: Donors

**Sarah Olney:** [\[57226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to create a unified stem cell donor recruitment policy across Anthony Nolan, NHS British



Bone Marrow Registry, DKMS and Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry, to (a) improve clarity for donors and (b) create an aligned UK stem cell register.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The Department's stem cell programme supported the development of the United Kingdom's aligned stem cell registry. All donors in the UK recruited by DKMS, Anthony Nolan, the Welsh Blood Service and NHS Blood and Transplant are accessed by the UK aligned registry. The Department's Stem Cell Strategic Forum's report due in early 2022 will address the future of UK stem cell supply.

■ **Sterilisation: Females**

**Virginia Crosbie:**

[\[57470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of women who suffer from post tubal ligation syndrome; and whether he plans to ask the NHS to recognise that syndrome.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* No estimate has been made and there are no plans to ask the National Health Service to recognise this as a syndrome. The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare is the body responsible for providing clinical guidance on contraception, including female sterilisation. As set out in the Faculty's clinical guidelines, there is no evidence that tubal ligation results in significant changes to hormone levels, nor is there evidence that it directly causes changes to menstrual symptoms or increased risk of subsequent hysterectomy. As such, post tubal ligation syndrome is not currently recognised by professional bodies in their clinical guidance. Any woman experiencing complications following surgery should seek advice from their general practitioner.

■ **Terminal Illnesses: Respite Care**

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[57477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce pressure on respite care for people with terminal illnesses.

**Gillian Keegan:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess the eligible social care needs of the local population and arrange respite care where necessary, including for people with terminal illnesses. We have supported councils to maintain services with access to over £1 billion of additional funding for social care in 2021-22, including for respite care for people with a terminal illness where required. Since the start of the pandemic we have also an additional £6 billion directly to councils to support them with the impacts of COVID-19 related spending pressures, including on social care services such as respite care.

## ■ Travel: Coronavirus

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[49090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government with regard to the international travel implications for British citizens who have received Covishield branded AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccinations.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* We continue to have regular discussions with the devolved administrations on a range of issues.

AstraZeneca doses branded as 'Covishield' are not approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and have not been administered in the United Kingdom. All doses of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines administered in the UK are the same product, which appear on the NHS COVID Pass as Vaxzevria.

The Government continues to engage with other countries regarding certification to ensure that global travel is supported by a common approach.

## ■ Urology: Diagnosis

**Alex Norris:**

[\[59934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, following publication of Diagnostics: Recovery and Renewal: Report by the Independent Review of Diagnostic Services for NHS England, what progress has been made on moving the urological outpatient workload to community diagnostic hubs.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 25 October 2021]:* The National Health Service is planning to establish 40 community diagnostic centres (CDCs) across England this year. Centres will begin to provide services over the next six months, with all being fully operational by March 2022.

Regions are working with local trusts and systems, diagnostic networks and primary care services to determine the location and configuration of services, based on the needs of the local population. These services will take on appropriate urological outpatient workload, including urine testing, with some CDCs potentially offering additional services, such as urodynamics.

## ■ Vaccination: Prisons

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[58801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to administer covid-19 vaccine booster doses alongside flu vaccines to those eligible in prisons in England.

**Maggie Throup:**

Flu and COVID-19 booster vaccines are ordered by and delivered directly to prison healthcare teams in the same way as vaccination services in the community. The

prison healthcare team will offer and administer the vaccines to eligible patients. Each establishment will decide on the best approach dependent on their facilities as to whether their clinics administer both the flu and COVID-19 booster vaccinations at the same time or separately.

## ■ **Wheelchairs: Procurement**

**Hilary Benn:** [\[56618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of wheelchairs made available to NHS patients in the last 12 months were manufactured in the UK.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

## ■ **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

**Mr David Jones:** [\[61122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out the positions the Government will advance at Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP9) on (a) e-cigarettes, (b) heated tobacco and (c) snus.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* The Department's policy position on e-cigarettes, heated tobacco, and snus at the ninth Conference of the Parties (COP9) of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control will be in accordance with the current 2017 Tobacco Control Plan for England, the regulations set out in the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and our ambition to be smoke-free by 2030.

The Department continues to support the use of e-cigarettes as a safer alternative to smoking and as a tool to help people to quit and we will continue to monitor the evidence. In 2017, the independent Committee on Toxicity recommended that heated tobacco still poses harm to users but may be less harmful than smoking conventional cigarettes. However, information on the health impacts is limited and therefore we recommend that people quit tobacco use altogether rather than move to these products. Oral tobacco or 'snus', remains banned under The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016.

**Mary Glendon:** [\[62723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has (a) for inclusive stakeholder engagement in advance of the Ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and (b) to include one of the UK's experts in tobacco harm reduction in the preparations for that COP.

**Maggie Throup:**

We have consulted widely on issues related to the Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. In line with

Article 5.3 of the Convention, the Department engages only with those stakeholders and experts who are independent of the tobacco industry.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Alcoholic Drinks: Drugs

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[59799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the spiking of women and girls' drinks' with illegal substances in nightclubs.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The reports of the spiking of drinks with illegal substances, and of other attacks on individuals in night time venues, are of course concerning. This is an ongoing matter which the police are investigating. The Home Secretary has asked the police for an urgent update on the issues reported, including what steps they are taking to prevent the offences and apprehend the perpetrators. We would encourage anyone who is a victim or a witness of the offences to report the information to the police.

The Government is supporting the rollout of pilot initiatives to improve the safety of women in public spaces at night, including in the night-time economy. We have committed to delivering a £5 million 'Safety of Women at Night' fund, in addition to the £25 million Safer Streets Fund Round 3. These funds will support projects that target potential perpetrators, seek to protect potential victims, or deliver programmes intended to address offending behaviour.

### ■ Animal Experiments: Chemicals

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[59750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the reasons for her Department's decision to align its approach to regulatory chemical testing with the Board of Appeal of the European Chemicals Agency in the 2020 Symrise ruling.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The approach outlined in Board of Appeal of the European Chemicals Agency in the 2020 Symrise ruling reflects the approach already taken within the United Kingdom.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[59751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the additional number of animal tests that will be required to be carried out in the UK as a result of the decision to align with the Board of Appeal of the European Chemicals Agency in the 2020 Symrise ruling and its approach to regulatory chemical testing.

**Rachel Maclean:**

There will be no increase in animal testing carried out in the UK because the Board of Appeal of the European Chemicals Agency in the 2020 Symrise ruling and its

approach to regulatory chemical testing reflects the approach already taken in the UK.

## ■ **Animal Experiments: Cosmetics**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[59749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a response to the open letter from Cruelty Free International and eighty cosmetics industry organisations dated 19 August 2021 asking that no changes are made to the UK ban on cosmetics testing on animals.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government can confirm, there has been no change to, and there is no plan to change, any of the legislation related to regulatory testing using animals in the UK.

## ■ **Asylum**

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[59952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many section 4(2) medical declaration forms have been sent to asylum seekers who (a) have had their claim for asylum rejected and (b) are residing in Home Office supported accommodation in 2021 as of 20 October 2021.

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[59953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many responses her Department has received from asylum seekers who were sent medical declaration forms by Migrant Help; and how many of those respondents were declared unfit to fly.

**Kevin Foster:**

The information requested is not held in a reportable format and would require a significant manual trawl of all cases through 2021 to date. As such, this would result in the incurrence of a disproportionate cost.

## ■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Security**

**Craig Tracey:**

[\[59869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much was spent by police forces on security and policing costs at each HS2 site since 2019.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Department does not centrally collect information on the cost to the public purse for each police force involved in policing the route of HS2.

## ■ **Home Office: Heating**

**Jake Berry:**

[\[58826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what type of heating system is the primary source of heating in each building occupied by her Department and its agencies; and what fuel is used by those heating systems.

**Tom Pursglove:**

This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Afzal Khan:**[\[62833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence sent by the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton on 1 September 2021 regarding Jan Muhammad.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office responded by MP Engagement telephone call on 26 October 2021

■ **Metropolitan Police: Boats****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[62627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the Metropolitan Police Service has been permitted an exemption from the IMO's Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships Regulations, with regard to the invitation to tender for four new rigid-hulled inflatable boats.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office does not procure or proscribe services to Police forces. It is a matter for each Force to assess and procure services proportionate to its needs to provide effective policing for their area as they are best placed to understand local needs and priorities.

■ **Police: Harlow****Robert Halfon:**[\[62701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers are serving in Harlow compared with 2018-19.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size of the police workforce in England and Wales on a biannual basis in the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin. However, data are collected at Police Force Area (PFA) level only, and information on officer numbers at lower levels of geography are not held centrally.

The latest in this statistical series covers the situation in both full time-equivalent (FTE) and headcount terms as at 31 March 2021, and can be found here: [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2021)

■ **Police: Radicalism****Luke Pollard:**[\[59028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has a strategy to tackle incel culture in Police forces in England.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government is determined, with police leaders, to tackle misogyny of any form across law enforcement.

We have published a new Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, which outlines our plans for a multi-million pound national communications campaign with a focus on targeting perpetrators and harmful misogynistic attitudes, educating young people about healthy relationships and ensuring victims can access support.

We are also funding a new National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls – Maggie Blyth. The HMICFRS inspection into the police response to VAWG crimes has shown that radical reform is needed. An immediate focus of the role will include working with police forces nationally and the Government to make sure action is taken in response to the inspectorate's findings and their recommendations considered and implemented as appropriate.

**■ Refugees: Afghanistan****Caroline Lucas:****[59766]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under what eligibility criteria women and girls at risk in Afghanistan will be assessed to receive help through the Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk. It will prioritise those who have stood up for values such as democracy and women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious minorities. This will include some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which prioritised individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

The Government will also work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify and resettle refugees who have fled Afghanistan. Those referred by UNHCR will be assessed for resettlement by UNHCR using their established process, and in line with their resettlement submission categories which specifically includes women and girls at risk.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement).

**Kim Johnson:****[59991]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which cities Afghan refugees are being resettled to in the UK.



**Victoria Atkins:**

We continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible for Afghan families who were evacuated to the UK. So far, over 300 local authorities across the UK have offered to house Afghan families. There are more than 11,000 individuals accommodated temporarily in bridging hotels across the UK, who were evacuated as part of Operation Pitting.

Children who have recently arrived from Afghanistan are entitled to a full time education and one of our priorities is to ensure they receive it. The duty to provide sufficient education for all school-age children rests with local authorities and the government is working closely with local authorities in whose areas Afghan families are resident to ensure they can access education as soon as possible.

In addition, we are urgently making available additional funds to support local authorities to provide educational support and help Afghan children and young people settle into their local schools and communities.

**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[62740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people evacuated from Afghanistan are currently housed in bridging hotels.

**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[62741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people evacuated from Afghanistan who are currently housed in bridging hotels have been given access to legal support.

**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[62742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what access to legal support her Department is facilitating for Afghans who were evacuated and are currently housed in bridging hotels.

**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[62743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to ensure that all Afghan people who were evacuated from Kabul and are housed in bridging hotels are able to access legal advice and support as a matter of urgency.

**Victoria Atkins:**

A significant cross Government effort is underway to ensure the thousands of Afghans who were evacuated to the UK receive the support they need to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education, and integrate into local communities. We continue to work with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible, although we have had to use hotels as a temporary measure due to unprecedented demand. In the meantime, we are providing wrap around support to enable families to build successful lives in the UK.

Legal Aid is available to all those entitled to it who are currently accommodated in the bridging hotels.

There are around 11,000 people in bridging accommodation.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[62775]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) Afghan refugees and (b) families who have arrived in the UK through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme (i) have been resettled into housing and (ii) remain in bridging hotels; what steps she is taking to ensure that all refugees are resettled, and what her timeframe is for that matter.

**Victoria Atkins:**

There is a significant cross Government effort underway to ensure Afghans arriving in the UK receive the support they need to rebuild their lives. This includes working at pace with NGOs, local authorities and the commercial sector to secure housing and ensure they have the support they need, while also making sure that local services aren't put under undue strain.

Figures will be released in due course.

## ■ Refugees: Urban Areas

**Kim Johnson:**

**[59992]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional financial support her Department is making available to (a) Liverpool and (b) other cities that are accommodating asylum seekers to ensure that they can provide adequate (i) health, (ii) schooling, (iii) housing and (iv) other support services.

**Kevin Foster:**

We recognise the important work Liverpool and Local Authorities across the UK undertake to support asylum seekers.

We have established working groups with Local Authorities to determine best practice, one of which relates to defining potential additional funding requirements.

## ■ Social Services: Recruitment

**James Wild:**

**[59984]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many senior care worker roles have been recruited through the skilled worker route in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Kevin Foster:**

The most recent published data can be found here:

[Visas and Citizenship data: Q2 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/visas-and-citizenship-data-q2-2021)

Information relating to Skilled workers (Tier 2) can be found on worksheet VC\_01a. However, such information is not broken down further into specific occupations, such as senior care workers.

## ■ Social Services: Vacancies

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[62684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2021 to Question 53853, on Social Services: Vacancies, if she will add all social care workers to the shortage occupation list alongside senior care workers in response to workforce shortages across the care sector.

**Kevin Foster:**

Senior care workers were added to the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) in April 2021, joining other key health and care occupations such as nurses, occupational therapists and social workers. Yet we do not believe it would be appropriate to create an immigration route which gives social care employers an opportunity to recruit at or near the minimum wage, with no work based training requirements, as an alternative to offering the type of rewarding packages which will attract UK based workers.

In July, I commissioned the MAC to review the impact of ending free movement on the social care sector. The MAC have issued a call for evidence with stakeholders and we look forward to receiving their report in April 2022

**Bill Esterson:** [\[62710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of adding entry level social care staff to the shortage occupation list.

**Kevin Foster:**

Senior care workers were added to the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) in April 2021, joining other key health and care occupations such as nurses, occupational therapists and social workers. Yet we do not believe it would be appropriate to create an immigration route which gives social care employers an opportunity to recruit at or near the minimum wage, with no work based training requirements, as an alternative to offering the type of rewarding packages which will attract UK based workers.

In July, I commissioned the MAC to review the impact of ending free movement on the social care sector. The MAC have issued a call for evidence with stakeholders and we look forward to receiving their report in April 2022.

## ■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[51680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the number of illegal small boat Channel crossings.

**Tom Pursglove:**

I refer the Honourable Gentleman to the answer given to the Member for Romford on 20 September. These crossings are dangerous and unnecessary, and we are determined to bring them to an end and to tackle the criminality behind them.

From January to September 2021, Immigration Enforcement has arrested 46 individuals engaged in small boats activity, with 8 individuals already convicted and a further 94 investigations ongoing. Recognising that much of the criminality involved lies outside of the UK, we are also supporting wider law enforcement activity to tackle the threat of organised immigration crime. In its first 12 months, the Joint Intelligence Cell was involved in almost 300 arrests relating to small boats activity in France.

We must ensure that those involved in people smuggling are punished with the severity it rightly deserves. The Nationality and Borders Bill ( [Nationality and Borders Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#) ( <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>) ) will enable this and will also act as a much stronger deterrent for those tempted to pursue that despicable path. These long overdue reforms will break the business model of the criminal trafficking networks and make their activities unviable.

There remains an immediate challenge and a need to stop the boats leaving France in the first place and we are working closely with the French to tackle these crossings, both on a policy and operational level. In July 2021 UK/French joint action led to strengthened law enforcement deployments along the coast of France, more than doubling again equipped police resource focused on addressing illegal migration; enhanced intelligence-sharing; greater use of surveillance technology; and more border security at key transport infrastructure along the Channel coast.

Progress so far this year between January and September 2021 has resulted in the French stopping more than 15,000 people from crossing. This is a significant increase on the same point last year.

Our New Plan for Immigration will address the challenge of illegal migration for the first time in over two decades through comprehensive reform of our asylum system, making big changes and building a new system that is fair but firm.

**Jonathan Gullis:**

**[52616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the number of small boat Channel crossings.

**Tom Pursglove:**

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## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Agriculture: Exports

**Adam Afriyie:** [\[60391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to help increase global export opportunities for farmers in (a) Windsor and Berkshire and (b) the UK.

**Adam Afriyie:** [\[60392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to help farmers across Windsor and Berkshire take advantage of the UK's new trade partnerships across the world.

**Mike Freer:**

Our trade agreements are unlocking new opportunities for our agriculture, food and drink sector. DIT recently launched an Export Support Service, where UK businesses can get answers to practical questions about exporting to Europe. Our 'Open Doors' campaign offers a wide range of support for businesses, including those in Windsor and Berkshire, who want to start exporting or expand into new markets. The campaign includes exporting masterclasses, a flagship agriculture mentoring programme and support to match producers with international buyers across the globe.

## ■ Agriculture: Trade Agreements

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[62815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the cumulative impact on Welsh agriculture of trade deals agreed since the UK's withdrawal from the EU .

**Penny Mordaunt:**

We publish analysis to assess the potential impacts of new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in advance of negotiations. On conclusion of negotiations, we publish full impact assessments. The analysis in these publications covers a number of areas, including the potential impacts on the UK's regions and nations as well as on sectors, such as agriculture.

We recognise the importance of reviewing the impact of our new FTAs and is currently developing the tools and approaches to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities.

## ■ Diplomatic Relations: Australia

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[62652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason her attendance at a dinner on 13 June 2021 at the residence of the Australian High Commissioner, also attended by Mr Lynton Crosby and Mr Isaac Levido, is not included in the April to June 2021 release of her Department's transparency data on ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Departments are not required to include meetings with foreign governments, or attendance at diplomatic functions hosted by foreign governments, in transparency returns.

## ■ Industrial Relations: Australia and New Zealand

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[62711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he made of the implications for his policies of the labour chapter of the proposed UK-Australia and UK-New Zealand trade agreements and compliance in collective bargaining under the terms of the principles of the International Labour Organisation.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

At the start of negotiations, the Government was clear that free trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand would not come at the expense of workers' rights in the UK. These agreements uphold this commitment to maintain the UK's high level of workers' rights and affirm our obligations under the International Labour Organization (ILO), including those related to collective bargaining.

The UK has ratified all eight of the Fundamental Conventions, and we continue to encourage our partners to do the same.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Overseas Investment

**Layla Moran:**

[\[62826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the human rights impact of support for clean energy projects overseas by the Government.

**Mike Freer:**

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is committed to high standards of environmental, social and human rights (ESHR) risk management. It rigorously follows the requirements of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Common Approaches and Equator Principles, which set the framework for export credit agencies and international financial institutions in managing such risks and impacts (including modern slavery risks in supply chains) for all projects in any sector. In addition, UKEF has developed procedures for identifying and assessing potential human rights risks on solar energy transactions that may fall outside the scope of the OECD Common Approaches and Equator Principles, as the solar energy sector was identified as being particularly exposed to potential human rights risks.

UKEF's specialist ESHR risk management team reviews relevant projects prior to UKEF taking a decision on whether to provide support. ESHR monitoring takes place throughout the lifetime of UKEF's support for such projects.

## JUSTICE

## ■ Coroners' Courts Support Service

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[59760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to provide long-term core funding for the Coroners' Courts Support Service; and if he will make a statement.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Coroners' Courts Support Service which recruits and trains volunteers who support families and witnesses as they engage with the coronial process, covers around half of the coroner areas. The Government recognises the good work Coroners' Courts Support Service offers to bereaved families but extending support services, such as the Coroners Courts Support Service, to all 85 coroner areas remains subject to affordability.

## ■ Homicide: Reoffenders

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[62798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of homicides were committed by people on (a) parole and (b) a life licence in England and Wales in each of the last three years.



**Kit Malthouse:**

The link below sets out the number of offenders convicted of murder, who at the time they committed the offence were being supervised on: a) an IPP licence; and b) life licence, in England and Wales between 2014/15 to 2019/20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics>

**Steps :**

1. Go to the landing page <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics>
2. Click on the latest October publication of the Proven Reoffending Statistics
3. The requested information is in Table 3 of the Serious Further Offence Tables

The information provided by financial years will be updated at 9:30 am on 28 October 2021.

We have interpreted 'parole' to mean offenders subject to an indeterminate sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) and released by the Parole Board.

We cannot provide the proportion of all murders in a given year which are committed by offenders subject to probation supervision due to differences in the way the respective data sets are produced. Published Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was recorded as a crime, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court.

**■ Platinum Jubilee 2022: Medals****Dan Jarvis:****[62731]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government has plans to award the Platinum Jubilee medal to people who have served in the prison service.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal will be awarded to frontline public sector staff in the prison service that have completed 5 years' service in an eligible grade, on 6 February 2022.

**■ Prisoners: Families****Kerry McCarthy:****[62637]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will include the provision of support services for families of prisoners, including where there is no contact because of the nature of the offences committed, in the tender for the Provision of HMPPS Prisoner, Family and Significant Other Services.

**Kerry McCarthy:****[62638]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on improving support services for children whose parents are

serving a term of imprisonment; and if he will include those services in his Department's tender for the Provision of HMPPS Prisoner, Family and Significant Other Services.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We recognise that families and significant other relationships can be a positive influence on reducing reoffending, and also encourage prisoners to maintain contact to improve prisoners' health and well-being. Strengthening these ties is one of the many important factors to successful rehabilitation, with studies showing that prisoners who receive family visits are 39% less likely to reoffend. We also recognise, however, that there are some circumstances where, owing to the nature of the offence, family contact would not be desirable.

Policy responsibility for children who may be vulnerable as a result of parental incarceration in England sits with the Secretary of State for Education, while policy responsibility is a devolved matter in Wales. As part of our commitment to strengthening family ties, we are working across Government with the Department of Education, Welsh Government and Other Government Departments, to understand how to best support children, who may be vulnerable, as a result of parental incarceration.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are in the process of developing requirements for the provision of the Prisoner, Family and Significant Other Services, that will operate from October 2022. As part of that process, HMPPS will be engaging with the external market to help inform and further develop the final specification for those services, which will subsequently be published within the procurement documentation and available to all potential bidders in January 2022.

■ **Wealstun Prison: Smuggling**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[58346]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Wealstun, published on 14 October 2021, what estimate he has made of the rate of false positives in scans for secreted items; and what recent assessment he has made of (a) the impact on procedural justice and (b) the efficacy for eliminating flows of contraband into prisons of automatically placing a prisoner on report when a scan indicates the possible presence of a secreted item.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The use of an X-ray body scanner must be fully justified, proportionate and the individual or societal benefit of the exposure must outweigh any potential health risks. It is a mandatory requirement that the justification for the scan is recorded in all cases. Prisoners are not routinely or randomly scanned and are only scanned on the basis of intelligence or suspicion, in cases where a full search would not be effective.

At this time, we are not able to accurately estimate the rate of false positives. This is because once a positive scan has been indicated, prisoners are referred to healthcare and offered the opportunity to privately remove and surrender any items they may be concealing internally. If they do not choose to or are not able to do this,

they will be kept isolated from the rest of the prisoner population until they pass and dispose of the item or produce a negative scan. They are then able to return to the prison population once they have received a negative scan. Therefore, not all positive scans relate to a 'find' as prisoners often dispose of the items privately, and they do not enter the prison environment.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Ms Karen Buck:**

[\[59708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure an adequate supply of housing for people with disabilities.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has consulted on raising accessibility standards of new homes recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people. The consultation considered whether a change could be made to the existing standards by either mandating a higher standard or reconsidering the way existing optional standards are used. The Government will publish a response. The new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 contains a target for 10% of delivery to be for specialist and supported housing. This will include housing suitable for those with disabilities. The Programme will deliver up to 180,000 homes in total, should economic conditions allow.

### ■ Affordable Housing: Construction

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[59711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans the Government has to build high quality and environmentally friendly affordable homes.

**Christopher Pincher:**

This Government is committed to increasing the supply of quality affordable housing and through the Affordable Homes Programme we are investing over £12 billion, including our new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme.

These new homes will need to align with the 'Future Home Standard' from 2025, to ensure they produce at least 75% fewer CO2 emissions than those built to current standards. This represents a considerable improvement in energy efficiency standards for new homes.

### ■ Building Safety Fund

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[59761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that applications to the Building Safety Fund are not prevented from progressing as a result of absent freeholders living overseas and who are

not responsive to requests to complete necessary paperwork and application forms; if he will take steps to compel all freeholders of UK properties to respond within a particular time-frame to requests to complete paperwork relating to the Building Safety Fund; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department and its delivery partners work closely with applicants to make sure that they are prompt in completing their application and engage with the Department to resolve any issues they are having. Where owners are based overseas, we will work with their UK-based representatives. Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress, those responsible should expect further action to be taken. Local Authority and Fire and Rescue Services have enforcement powers and the Government is supporting them to use those powers against high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[59762]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether data is being collected from applications to the Building Safety Fund to identify the names of developers responsible for developments where build defects have been identified during the External Wall System EWS process; what mechanism he will use to take action against developers where repeated defects are found in their development blocks during the EWS process and the developer is delaying remedial work by not accepting liability; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Applicants to the Building Safety Fund are asked to provide information about the developer of the building. We are committed to making sure that applicants carry out remedial work without delay, and that developers make a fair contribution towards costs. Applicants to the Fund are required, as part of any funding agreement, to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to recover the costs of replacing the unsafe cladding from those responsible through insurance claims, warranties or legal action. We are securing a significant contribution from developers towards remediation costs by introducing a new Residential Property Developer Tax to raise at least £2 billion over 10 years, and implementing a levy on developers at 'gateway two' of the new building safety regime. And we do not rule out further action to protect leaseholders and taxpayers and make sure that industry pays its fair share.

■ **Building Safety Fund: Brighton and Hove**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[59763]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to his Department's Building Safety Fund registration statistics, how many and what proportion of properties within the Brighton and Hove local authority area that have registered with that Fund are in the Brighton Pavilion constituency; and of those registrations, how many have been (a) processed, (b) approved, and (c) paid.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As at 21 October 2021, 18 registrations to the Building Safety Fund have been received covering a total of 20 buildings in Brighton and Hove, of which three buildings are in the Brighton Pavilion constituency. Of the 20 buildings registered in Brighton and Hove, seven have been either been withdrawn or assessed as ineligible, 10 are having their eligibility assessed, and three buildings have been assessed as eligible and their applications for funding are progressing. All three of the eligible buildings are in the Brighton Pavilion constituency, two of which have received funding.

**Buildings: Carbon Emissions****Steve Reed:**[\[62737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he plans to publish a strategy on his Department's role in the delivery of net zero by 2050, including the role of local authorities in retrofitting existing homes and commercial buildings.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Department has worked closely with BEIS to develop the Net Zero Strategy and the Heat and Buildings Strategy, which outline our approach to reaching net zero and to decarbonising heat in buildings.

Local authorities play an essential role in driving local climate action across energy, housing, and transport. We continue to work with local authorities, capitalising on their unique knowledge of their communities, which is essential to ensuring effective delivery of net zero locally.

**Buildings: Insulation****Caroline Lucas:**[\[59764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 13917, when he plans to announce further details of the long-term, low-interest loan scheme for leaseholders in buildings below 18 metres where dangerous cladding needs to be removed; when that loan scheme will be open for applications; whether he has assessed the reasons for the low take up of that loan scheme set up for similar purposes in Victoria, Australia; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Building owners and industry should make buildings safe without passing on costs to leaseholders and we are introducing new measures that will legally require building owners to prove they have tried all routes to cover costs. The Government has announced a globally unprecedented investment of over £5 billion in building safety and hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be protected from the cost of remediating unsafe cladding from their homes. The Secretary of State is looking closely at this issue to make sure everything is being done to support leaseholders.

Further detail on the support offer for leaseholders in residential buildings of 11-18 metres will be released when all options have been fully considered. Officials are in regular contact with their counterparts in Victoria and the Department is committed to working with our international colleagues on matters of building safety.

## ■ Buildings: Insurance

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [59830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what advice he can give to leaseholders in buildings below 18 metres in height, where mortgage lenders are refusing to give mortgages without an EWS1 form, despite the Government's clarification that EWS1 forms are not needed in buildings of that size.

**Christopher Pincher:**

An independent expert statement in July this year was clear that there is no systemic risk of fire in residential buildings under 18 metres and that EWS1 forms should not be required by lenders on buildings under 18 metres. The Government strongly supports this position and made this clear in its written statement of 21 July.

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [59831]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what requirements are in place for EWS1 forms for apartment buildings which are (a) below 18 metres in height and (b) in need of remedial work according to a fire safety survey completed by the building's owners.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Following the Independent Expert Statement in July this year on Building Safety in medium and lower rise blocks of flats, the Government strongly supports the expert group's position that EWS1 forms should not be required on buildings under 18 metres. Any concerns identified in buildings under 18 metres, via an up to date statutory fire risk assessment, should be addressed primarily by risk management and mitigation, before any remediation considerations.

## ■ Buildings: Safety

**Mike Amesbury:** [59954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of trends in the number of civil servants working on the Building Safety Programme since the inception of that programme.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Core departmental workforce numbers are published online at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/workforce-management>.

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Carbon Emissions**

**Steve Reed:**

[\[62738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether a Minister in his Department has been assigned as the lead on his Department's role in helping to deliver net zero.

**Eddie Hughes:**

As the lead Minister on net zero for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, I look forward to driving the delivery of net zero for our Department. I recognise that as the department for levelling up and housing policy, we play an important role in the government's ambition to reach net zero.

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Heating**

**Jake Berry:**

[\[58827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what type of heating system is the primary source of heating in each building occupied by his Department and its agencies; and what fuel is used by those heating systems.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Department's estate is managed by the Government Property Agency and we do not hold this data. The Government Property Agency will be looking at decarbonising the Estate, as part of their wider work of their strategic asset management planning.

■ **Holiday Accommodation: Non-domestic Rates**

**James Wild:**

[\[59983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Tax Policies and Consultations published on 23 March 2021, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to change the business rates criteria for self-catering accommodation to account for actual days the property was rented.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

My Department has been working with Treasury and the Valuation Office Agency to agree details of how and when the new criteria will be implemented. In doing so, we have been taking into account the tourism sector's recovery from Covid-19, varying market conditions across England and consistency with other countries within the Union. We will set out further details shortly in the Government's consultation response.

■ **Homelessness: Coronavirus**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[59890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to review the Everybody In scheme; and what lessons his Department have learned for future homelessness prevention from that scheme.



**Eddie Hughes:**

Our pandemic response was widely commended, including by the Kerslake Commission and the National Audit Office (NAO), which cited our clear messaging and collaborative approach as key to galvanising local authorities to protect people sleeping rough from COVID-19.

The pandemic has demonstrated the powerful impact that we can have when government, local government, and the voluntary and community sector work together with health and housing partners.

Our work to support people off the streets and protect the most vulnerable from COVID-19 continues and we are committed to ending rough sleeping for good, not just as an emergency pandemic response.

We continue to build on the successes of Everyone In and we have been clear with councils and partners that those helped into accommodation during the pandemic should be offered the tailored support they need to move forwards.

We are committed to tackling homelessness in all its forms, and this government has committed to ending rough sleeping and to fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.

**■ Homelessness: Young People****Helen Hayes:**[\[59888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking (a) in response to the recent rise in youth homelessness and (b) in preparation to support homeless people in winter 2021-22.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a priority for this Government. That is why we are spending more than £750 million on this issue this year alone. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has enabled young people to access support where they may not have previously been eligible.

Our youth homelessness advisors work with local authorities to promote better joint working across housing authorities and children's services to better identify and support young people at risk of homelessness. This year, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be funding a number of local projects, to support local authorities to ensure they have the skills and expertise to prevent homelessness.

The £3 million Homelessness Winter Transformation Fund will support 60 projects run by faith and community groups to support rough sleepers this winter. We have also announced £65 million to help vulnerable renters with rent arrears in England who may be at risk of eviction or homelessness this winter.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[59889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impact of the removal of the uplift to the standard



allowance of universal credit and the end of the furlough scheme on youth homelessness (a) in general and (b) among black Britons.

**Eddie Hughes:**

a) The temporary £20 increase to universal credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and was part of a COVID support package worth £407 billion. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus now is on helping people back into work. Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes to help up to two million people get into and progress in work

b) We recognise that some people may continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £500 million Household Support Fund to support vulnerable households across the UK with essential costs this winter. The Government has also announced a further £65 million to help vulnerable renters with rent arrears in England who may be at risk of eviction or homelessness.

■ **Housing Associations: Fire Prevention**

**Rushanara Ali:**

[57039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what budget (a) his Department or (b) the Homes and Communities Agency holds for contingency funding to provide financial support to a housing association facing a critical fire safety issue; and what the terms of access to that funding are.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Department does not hold a budget for contingency funding to provide financial support in these circumstances. The Department expects the building owner, developer or insurer to take responsibility for the costs arising from a critical incident. High rise social sector buildings with unsafe cladding systems, however, can apply for funding from the Government's grant funding schemes, worth £5.1 billion in total, to remove and replace the unsafe cladding if they meet the eligibility criteria. The criteria and process differs depending on the type of cladding system. More information on the funds, including their criteria, can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme).

■ **Housing: Bethnal Green and Bow**

**Rushanara Ali:**

[60420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to Clarion Housing Group's decision to urgently decant tenants and leaseholders from Clare House, if he will ask that organisation to specify how many additional homes it has bought to provide permanent alternative housing for people who have lost their home since receiving Arup's report on 17 September 2021 on the fire safety and structural problems.

**Rushanara Ali:**

**[60421]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to Clarion Housing Group's decision to urgently decant tenants and leaseholders from Clare House, whether that organisation has the legal power to make direct offers of alternative permanent housing to those who have lost their home.

**Rushanara Ali:**

**[60422]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will ask the Regulator for Social Housing to commence an investigation into whether residents of Clare House have suffered serious detriment that would amount to a breach of its regulatory standards through the way those residents have been dealt with by Clarion Housing Group since they first started raising concerns about their own safety in the wake of the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017.

**Rushanara Ali:**

**[60423]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to Clarion Housing Group's decision to urgently decant tenants and leaseholders from Clare House, if he will ask the Regulator for Social Housing to report the reasons for which it did not speak to tenants of that block as part of its investigation in 2018-19 into whether tenants had suffered serious detriment following a complaint received about its repairs contract with Ecolution at that time.

**Christopher Pincher:**

All registered providers of social housing are expected to make sure that their properties are well managed and of appropriate quality, and they must comply with the regulatory standards set by the independent Regulator of Social Housing. Landlords are required to engage with their tenants and put things right as soon as possible. The regulator considers all relevant referrals and complaints it receives to ascertain whether there has been a breach of the consumer standards that risks or caused serious harm to tenants that might warrant further regulatory action. The Regulator does not have a role in proactively seeking tenants' views on the performance of their landlord. Following the commitments made in the Charter for Social Housing Residents, we will give the Regulator stronger powers to proactively monitor and drive compliance with consumer standards, including new tenant satisfaction measures to help assess landlord performance on issues like repairs and complaints handling.

The Department has been in regular contact with Clarion Housing Group and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets regarding the situation at Clare House. Clarion Housing Group has responsibility for the safety of residents at Clare House and for providing residents with appropriate alternative accommodation following the decision to decant residents from the building. Clarion Housing Group has confirmed that they have made residents a comprehensive offer of support which will include permanent alternative accommodation. The Department and the Local Authority expects Clarion Housing Group to move quickly to provide alternative permanent accommodation and provide support to evacuated residents for as long as it is required.

## ■ Land: Valuation

**Lucy Powell:**

**[62733]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October to Questions 58403, 58404, 58405 and 58406, what the average value is per hectare (a) nationally and (b) regionally of land designated for (i) agricultural, (ii) industrial and (iii) residential use.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Given the large variation in land values within the country and within regions, we do not publish national or regional average land values estimates. However, we do publish land value estimates at local authority level for residential and industrial land and at local enterprise partnership (LEP) level for agricultural and commercial office land.

As set out in my response to Question UIN 58403, the latest published land value estimates for all of the required typologies are published at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-value-estimates-for-policy-appraisal-2019>.

## ■ Landlords: Liverpool

**Dan Carden:**

**[59944]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to publish his Department's decision on the Liverpool Landlord Licensing scheme.

**Eddie Hughes:**

We have received Liverpool City Council's application for a selective licensing scheme. Each application is assessed on its merits against the statutory criteria. Timings can be affected by the complexity of an application and whether further information is required. We will update on the outcome of the application in due course.

## ■ Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

**Paul Girvan:**

**[57269]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many bids have been submitted to the first round of the Levelling Up Fund from Northern Ireland by constituency.

**Neil O'Brien:**

I am delighted to say that the first round of the Levelling Up Fund received significant interest from Northern Ireland bidding authorities across the three investment priorities of the Fund. Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund were announced at Spending Review on 27 October and the list of successful bids across UK has been published on GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-first-round-successful-bidders>

## ■ Local Government: Environment Protection

**Kerry McCarthy:** [52636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent discussions he has had with Homes England on working with local councils to help them meet their environmental objectives.

**Christopher Pincher:**

One of Homes England's four statutory objectives as set out in the Homes and Communities Act 2008 is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and good design in England. This continues to be an important part of my on-going conversations with the agency

Homes England works with local authorities as a matter of course and supporting their Environmental Objectives is an important part of this. For example, the Homes England Local Government Capacity Centre is offering learning sessions including Environmental Considerations in Brownfield Housing Schemes and a further one on Biodiversity Net Gain.

## ■ Local Government: Meetings

**Tim Farron:** [59748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impact of returning to in-person council meetings on (a) the conduct of council business and (b) attendance at meetings by councillors and members of the public.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Department has not carried out any assessment of the impact of returning to in-person council meetings. The Local Government Act 1972 specifies that council meetings must take place in person at a single, specified, geographical location, and being 'present' at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location.

## ■ Planning Permission

**Dr Ben Spencer:** [59982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will publish the number of formal breaches of planning permission recorded by each local authority in 2019.

**Christopher Pincher:**

This information is regularly published and available here at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics> (See tables 127, 129 and 130).

## ■ Private Rented Housing: Reform

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[59710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to bring forward a Renters Reform Bill that includes a landlord register and scrapping no-fault Section 21 evictions.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government remains committed to building back fairer and delivering a better deal for renters. To that end, we will publish a White Paper setting out a package of reforms that creates a fairer private rented sector that works for both tenants and landlords. This will include providing further detail on repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and well targeted, effective enforcement that drives out criminal landlords, for example exploring the merits of a landlord register.

We are undertaking robust and structured stakeholder engagement working with the sector to inform this while also learning from the pandemic and its impact on the sector. Following the publication of the White Paper, we will bring forward legislation.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development: Stockport

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[62644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to make an announcement relating to the Levelling-up fund bid for a start-up business and employment hub at the former Reddish baths building in Stockport.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund were announced on 27 October.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development: Unemployment

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[62647\]](#)

SUGGESTED REDRAFT: To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what weight his Department gives to the level of unemployment in an area when considering a bid to the Levelling-up Fund.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Applications to the Levelling Up Fund were all scored against the published assessment framework set out in the Levelling Up Fund Technical Note. As part of the strategic fit criteria, places were invited to set out the local challenges and barriers to growth, and alignment with wider local priorities and strategies, which were taken into account in our assessment of bids.

## ■ Restoring Your Railway Fund

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[62646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what input he has into the allocation of Restoring Your Railways funding as part of the wider levelling-

up agenda; and whether he has seen the bid for the line between Ashton-under-Lyne and Stockport, serving Denton and Reddish South stations.

**Neil O'Brien:**

My Department has regular input into the Restoring Your Railway Programme at official and Ministerial level. The former Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, the Hon Member (Luke Hall MP), was on the Restoring Your Railways Ideas Fund Panel which considered the bid for the line between Ashton-under-Lyne and Stockport.

The outcomes were announced on 27 October and the Hon Member's bid to the Ideas Fund for development funding was successful.

■ **Retail Trade: Urban Areas**

**Ian Murray:**

[\[59776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Scotland on recommencing the Great British High Street initiative.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Government shares the passion that local communities have for their high streets and is committed to helping high streets and town centres adapt and thrive following COVID-19. Government's priority has been to ensure safe and successful reopening of high streets, and ensure investment in regeneration of town centres and high streets through the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund.

To support places in revitalising and reinventing their High Streets, Government published the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy on 15 July 2021. The Strategy sets out Government's long-term plan to support the evolution and regeneration of all high streets across every part of the UK into thriving places to work, visit and live. As part of the strategy we set out a commitment to holding a National High Streets Day in 2022 to highlight vibrant high streets. The Government is also reviewing options for recommencing the Great British High Street Awards next year.

■ **River Wye: Pollution**

**Jesse Norman:**

[\[59777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of pollution in the River Wye for (a) local housing, (b) the local environment and (c) levelling up.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is committed to delivering the homes this country needs and is striving to level up all parts of the country. The Government's Get Building Fund, via the Marches LEP, has invested £1 million in the River Wye catchment, to aid the construction of Integrated Wetlands to mitigate the sources of nutrient pollution. This will enable the delivery of 1,385 nutrient neutral dwellings in the catchment.

## ■ Towns Fund

**Steve Reed:**

[\[62735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 56314 on Towns Fund, how much of the referenced funding has been paid out as of 22 October 2021.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Both the Town Deal and Future High Streets elements of the Towns Fund are releasing funding on a rolling basis according to the financial profiles supplied by towns. All 101 Towns invited to submit proposals for a Town Deal have been provided with a Heads of Terms offer, worth a combined total of £2.4 billion; in addition, all 72 successful Future High Streets places have been allocated funding, worth a combined total of £830 million.

**Steve Reed:**

[\[62736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 56314 on Towns Fund, if he will publish the heads of terms for each of the 101 towns offered Town Deals.

**Neil O'Brien:**

It is for individual local authorities to decide how and when to publish this information.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[903823\]](#)

If he will have discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on delays in the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland in concluding investigations.

**Brandon Lewis:**

The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is an independent and impartial organisation; It would not be appropriate for the Government to enter into discussions on the conduct of their investigations.

The Hon Gentleman is welcome to write to me directly on this topic.

### ■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

**Mark Fletcher:**

[\[903827\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Irish Government on addressing the legacy of the Troubles.

**Brandon Lewis:**

Following the British and Irish Intergovernmental Conference in June, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and I jointly initiated an intensive period of engagement on legacy, with a view to finding a way forward as soon as possible.



Since then my officials and I have and continue to engage with the Northern Ireland parties and other key stakeholders as part of this process, and in partnership with our colleagues in the Irish Government.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Scotland Office: Quarantine

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[61104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many of his Department's ministers have been exempted from quarantine in a hotel after returning to the UK from a covid-19 red list country to which they have travelled for the purposes of conducting official business.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

No Minister from the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland has travelled to a country while the country was on the covid-19 red list for the purpose of conducting official business.

### ■ Scotland Office: Stonewall

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[61066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what funding his Department has allocated to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and for what projects.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland has been a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champion Programme since 1 April 2019. The Office pays an annual membership fee of £3,000 per annum.

### ■ Tidal Power: Scotland

**Ian Murray:**

[\[61137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues in (a) the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) HM Treasury on ring-fenced support for Scottish renewable tidal energy in the Contracts for Difference Allocation Round 4 (AR4) process; and will he make a statement.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

I regularly discuss issues of importance to Scotland with Cabinet colleagues, including the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and HM Treasury. There is significant potential for Scotland to benefit from the development of tidal stream energy and I recently wrote, in my capacity as a champion of the Scottish renewables sector, urging my Cabinet colleagues in both BEIS and HM Treasury to look closely at a separate allocation to support tidal stream development in the Contracts for Difference Allocation Round 4.



**TRANSPORT**■ **Bats: Conservation**

**Jesse Norman:** [61141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much has been spent to date on bat protection and mitigation.

**Jesse Norman:** [61142]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the HS2 budget is for bat protection and mitigation.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd does not have a specific bat protection budget. Most environmental and ecological mitigations - such as hedgerow, wetland, woodland or grassland creation - will be deployed to mitigate the impact of construction upon multiple species. As such, it is not possible to isolate a proportion of the cost of these mitigations to specific bat protection.

In some circumstances, obligations to protect specific bat populations can arise from legislative and regulatory arrangements, or from undertakings and assurances given to Parliament through the hybrid Bill process. Where this is the case, HS2 Ltd will seek physical or ecological solutions that fulfil the requirements of those obligations to the satisfaction of licensing authorities such as Natural England, but which also take account of the need to provide value for money to the taxpayer.

■ **Driving Licences: British Nationals Abroad**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [62626]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria are used to decide whether UK citizens returning to the UK can exchange their non-British driving licence for a British licence.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The law requires that driving licences are only granted to drivers who are resident in the UK for at least 185 days in each calendar year and hold a valid, exchangeable licence which has been issued by an EU/EEA country or one of the other designation countries listed [here](#).

If a driver does not hold an exchangeable licence but previously held a UK licence, the UK licence will be reissued.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Buses**

**Chi Onwurah:** [62721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 59787, Electric Vehicles: Buses, how many electric buses are in service in Newcastle as a result of that funding.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Nine electric buses are currently in service on Go North East's Newcastle and Gateshead services. These buses were part funded by £1,330,005 in funding from the Ultra Low Emission Bus Scheme.

In March 2021, the Department awarded £1,270,005 in funding from the Ultra Low Emission Bus Scheme to Go North East for a further nine electric buses. These buses are expected to enter service on Go North East's services in Newcastle and Gateshead in 2022.

**■ High Speed Two: Advertising**

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on advertising and media relation agencies in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

In line with the Government's transparency agenda, HS2 Ltd publishes data for all payments over £25,000 and any payments over £500 made using corporate purchasing cards. This information is available on gov.uk

**■ High Speed Two: Alcoholic Drinks**

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on alcoholic drinks in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Expense claims for alcoholic drinks are not permitted within the travel and expense policy.

**■ High Speed Two: Art Works**

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish details of expenditure by HS2 Ltd on artworks in (a) 2019 (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 by (a) cost, (b) name and (c) description of each item.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

In line with the Government's transparency agenda, HS2 Ltd publishes data for all payments over £25,000 and any payments over £500 made using corporate purchasing cards. This information is available on gov.uk

**■ High Speed Two: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the total (a) amount of Job Retention Scheme disbursements paid to HS2 Ltd and (b) number of HS2 Ltd staff furloughed during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd did not access the Job Retention Scheme or furlough any staff during 2020-21.

**■ High Speed Two: Corporate Hospitality****Craig Tracey:****[59868]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on hosting hospitality events and receptions in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2L does not keep a separate register for hospitality events and receptions but does record all expenditure in the annual report and accounts and discloses all expenditure over £25,000 via transparency reporting on gov.uk

**■ High Speed Two: Pay****Craig Tracey:****[59874]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the amount overpaid to staff of HS2 Ltd in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

All unrecovered overpayments are published in HS2 Ltd's annual accounts as part of Losses and special payments. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-annual-reports-and-accounts>

**■ High Speed Two: Photographs****Craig Tracey:****[59879]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on portraits, such as a painting, drawing or engraving of a photographic portrait, or headshots of a person such as a member of staff, in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

In line with the Government's transparency agenda, HS2 Ltd publishes data for all payments over £25,000 and any payments over £500 made using corporate purchasing cards. This information is available on gov.uk

**■ High Speed Two: Plants****Craig Tracey:****[59880]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on real or artificial plants for use in HS2 offices in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

In line with the Government's transparency agenda, HS2 Ltd publishes data for all payments over £25,000 and any payments over £500 made using corporate purchasing cards. This information is available on gov.uk

**■ High Speed Two: Remote Working**

**Craig Tracey:** [59875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the amount spent by HS2 Ltd on enabling staff to work from home in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The spend via expenses for IT and DSE equipment (chairs, desks, risers etc) related to home working is as follows:

£69,843 in 2020

£35,128 for 2021(January – September)

**■ High Speed Two: Sanitation**

**Craig Tracey:** [59877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on gender neutral toilets at HS2 offices in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2L does not keep a separate register for the costs of gender neutral toilets as all expenditure on items such as this would be included in the overall costs of workplace accommodation.

**■ High Speed Two: Security**

**Craig Tracey:** [59870]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much has been spent by HS2 Ltd for private security at each HS2 office and site since 2019.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

In line with the Government's transparency agenda, HS2 Ltd publishes data for all payments over £25,000 and any payments over £500 made using corporate purchasing cards. This information is available on gov.uk

**■ High Speed Two: Telephone Services**

**Craig Tracey:** [59867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the (a) amount spent by HS2 Ltd on helpline call centres in (i) 2019, (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2021 and (b) number of calls dealt with by those centres in each of those years.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

(a) In line with the Government's transparency agenda, HS2 Ltd publishes every payment over £25,000 and all payments over £500 using corporate purchasing cards.

(b) This information is published in HS2 Ltd's Community Engagement Progress Reports which are available on [https://www.hs2.org.uk/document\\_types/community-engagement-progress-reports/](https://www.hs2.org.uk/document_types/community-engagement-progress-reports/)

## ■ High Speed Two: Travel

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much has HS2 Ltd spent on (a) rail, (b) air and (c) road travel since 2019.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd spend for rail, air and road travel – which reduced as a result of the pandemic - is as follows:

	2019	2020	2021 (TO SEPT)
Air	£ 30,525	£2,747	£271
Rail	£2,646,434	£405,494	£123,530
Road	£170,590	£74,586	£78,644

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish details of expenditure by HS2 Ltd on domestic and overseas trips for employees in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021, by destination.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd publishes data on senior officials' expenses and hospitality associated with business trips as part of its transparency disclosures available on gov.uk. This information is updated on a quarterly basis.

## ■ High Speed Two: Travel Cards

**Craig Tracey:** [\[59882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much was spent by HS2 Ltd on railcards for staff in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Between 2019 and 2020 there was zero spend on railcards. From April 2021 employees can claim the cost of a railcard (up to £30). One claim has been made to date.

## ■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences

**Maria Eagle:** [\[62617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average length of time is an applicant for a new HGV or PSV licence must wait to receive the licence; and if he will make a statement.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is currently prioritising applications for vocational driving licences and has moved additional staff into this area. Applications for provisional vocational licences are being processed within the normal turnaround time of five working days.

**Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Off-payroll Working****Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[62892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of IR35 changes on the number of drivers available to the haulage industry.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The off-payroll working rules (IR35) are designed to ensure individuals working like employees but through their own limited or personal service company, pay broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance contributions as those who are directly employed.

This is not a new tax; the reform improves compliance with existing rules. Non-compliance with these rules was widespread and it is estimated that this would have cost the Exchequer £1.3 billion per year by 2023/24 if not addressed. The Government had delayed the introduction of the changes by a year to April 2021 in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have no data on the impact on the number of HGV drivers.

**Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[62817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to produce an environmental impact assessment on the potential additional lorry miles that may occur as a result of the weight restrictions on volumetric concrete mobile plants from 2028.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Following regulatory changes in 2017, a temporary regime was put in place to allow a limited number of volumetric concrete mixers (VCMs) to temporarily operate at higher than standard weights until 2028 at the latest. An impact assessment was undertaken at the time of the regulatory changes in 2017 and there are no plans to produce an additional environmental impact assessment.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[62818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has collected evidence on the potential impact of 38.4 tonne volumetric concrete mobile plants on the UK's roads.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Following consultation in 2017, National Highways (then Highways England) commissioned a report into the loading effect on bridges of permitting volumetric

concrete mixers (VCMs) to operate at higher than the standard applicable weights for vehicles of their design, including 38.4 tonnes.

■ **Public Transport: Newcastle upon Tyne**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[62722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support he is offering for (a) integrated transport, (b) integrated ticketing and (c) subsidised bus fares in Newcastle; and how that support compares with the support he is offering for the same services (i) in London and (ii) to City Region Mayors.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Officials from the Department are working with representatives from the city regions, including Nexus and Transport North East, to establish options for integrated and multi-modal ticketing.

The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements and wider Government support for bus services will provide funding in the lifetime of this Parliament to support all eligible city regions. The North East will be eligible for these settlements once appropriate governance is in place. Existing commitments from the Transforming Cities Fund and core local authority transport funding continue to be met.

■ **Railways: Greater Manchester**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[62645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to make an announcement relating to the Restoring Your Railways fund bid for the line between Ashton-under-Lyne and Stockport, serving Denton and Reddish South stations.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Hon Member will have seen that we announced outcomes to the third round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund in the Autumn Budget, and that his bid for Ashton to Stockport has been successful.

■ **Transport: St Helens North**

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[62758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what transport projects in St Helens North constituency are set to receive funding as part of the £710 million planned for the Liverpool City Region.

**Trudy Harrison:**

As announced at the Spending Review on 27 October, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements will deliver £5.7bn over 5 years to transform local transport networks in 8 English city regions. This includes allocating £710m to Liverpool City Region. The Mayor of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is now responsible for submitting a programme business case to HMG. This should be



comprehensive across local priorities, culminating in a single transport plan and pipeline for the entire city region.

## TREASURY

### ■ Beer: Scotland

**David Duguid:** [\[59922\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support small independent breweries in Scotland.

**Helen Whately:**

The Treasury has acted through its unprecedented coronavirus response to support small breweries, including through furlough, grants and allowing breweries to remain open throughout the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Treasury committed to reform Small Brewers Relief (SBR) to ensure it continued to support growth. Our review is ongoing, and we will publish our response to our technical consultation in due course.

As announced at Autumn Budget 2021, the duty rates on alcohol will be frozen for another year, saving consumers £3 billion over the coming years. This will save beer drinkers £900m and consumers 3p off a pint of beer. Since ending the beer duty escalator in 2013, compared to previous planned rises, consumers have saved 21p off a pint of beer.

### ■ Climate Change: Economic Situation

**Helen Hayes:** [\[59894\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the long-term economic costs of future climate change; and what steps he has taken to prepare for the effects of climate change on the UK economy.

**Helen Whately:**

HM Treasury has published the Net Zero Review (NZR), which is an analytical report that uses existing data to explore the key issues and trade-offs as the UK decarbonises. This is against a backdrop of uncertainty on technology and costs, as well as changes to the economy over the next thirty years. It focuses on the potential exposure of households and businesses to the transition, and highlights factors to be taken into account in designing policy that will allocate costs over this time horizon.

As highlighted in the Net Zero Review, the overall impact is uncertain and challenging to estimate. Existing estimates suggest that the impact on GDP by the end of the transition is likely to be relatively small, and dwarfed by the costs of global inaction. The economic impact will be uneven across the economy. The scale of the change for some businesses, sectors and regions is likely to be substantial. Ultimately, this will depend on policy decisions and how the economy responds.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published the Net Zero Strategy, which sets out the Government's vision for the transition to a net zero economy and outlines illustrative paths to meet the UK's emissions targets. HM Treasury is already taking action, for example by issuing the world's first Sovereign Green Bond to fund public investment, establishing the UK Infrastructure Bank to support novel and emerging green technologies, and publishing the Roadmap to Sustainable Investing to put UK businesses in a better position to withstand climate-related risks and seize the opportunities presented by the transition to net zero. HM Treasury has also reviewed its governance, capabilities and processes to support this transition, as set out in the Net Zero Review.

The Net Zero Review can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-review-final-report>.

The Net Zero Strategy can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>.

## ■ Debts: Developing Countries

**Layla Moran:**

[62828]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions officials in his Department are having with their counterparts in G7 countries on expanding the scope of the G20's Common Framework to enable debt relief for climate-vulnerable middle income countries.

**John Glen:**

Support for vulnerable countries is a key priority for the UK as G7 and COP26 Presidents this year. This includes supporting those countries with challenging debt situations and climate-vulnerable countries.

The G20 and Paris Club's Common Framework brings together G20 and Paris Club creditors to coordinate and cooperate on debt treatments on a case-by-case basis on the request of a debtor country. There are 73 eligible countries, primarily low-income countries but this also includes some climate-vulnerable, middle-income countries. For those countries that are ineligible, there are existing mechanisms for debt treatment under the Paris Club.

## ■ Debts: Government Assistance

**Ruth Jones:**

[61205]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps he has taken to support people experiencing problem debt.

**John Glen:**

The Government put in place an unprecedented package of support to help people during the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting livelihoods with the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and temporary welfare measures. The Government also worked with mortgage lenders, credit providers and the Financial Conduct Authority to help people manage their finances

with payment holidays, and took unprecedented action to support renters, ensuring that no-one was forced from their home during lockdown.

However, the Government recognises that the full impact of the pandemic on people's personal finances is still unfolding and that some are struggling at this challenging time. To help people in problem debt get their finances back on track, the Government agreed to maintain record levels of funding for free-to-consumer debt advice in England in 2021-22, bringing this year's debt advice budget for the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) to £94.6 million. This is a more than 70% increase since 2019-20 to help more people who are struggling with their finances during the pandemic.

In addition to this, the Breathing Space scheme launched in England and Wales, offering people in problem debt a pause of up to 60 days on most enforcement action, interest, fees and charges, and encouraging them to seek professional debt advice.

The Government has also changed the existing monetary eligibility limits for a Debt Relief Order in England and Wales; increasing the value of assets that a debtor can hold, the level of surplus income received and the total debt allowable. This will give more people with low levels of assets and low income who are in problem debt access to a suitable and proportionate solution.

#### ■ Deposit Return Schemes: VAT

**Ian Murray:**

[\[59774\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with stakeholders on the potential merits of exempting the Scottish deposit return scheme for drinks bottles and cans from value added tax.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Chancellor keeps the tax system under review and is always glad to receive representations for improving it.

Officials have received representations from the Scottish Government and range of other stakeholders and have had meetings with them.

#### ■ Electronic Funds Transfer: Fees and Charges

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[62565\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to ensure all payment service providers publish the total costs they charge, including sending and receiving fees, costs charged by any intermediaries, foreign exchange rate and currency conversion charges; and if he will make a statement.

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[62566\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to enforce cross border payments price transparency in line with the Cross Border Payments Regulation 2; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises the importance of transparency of fees and charges in ensuring effective competition between payment service providers.

The Payment Services Regulations 2017 make several requirements on UK payment service providers regarding disclosure of fees and charges to the payer, for example, the exchange rate used for a currency conversion transaction. Provisions under the Cross Border Payments Regulation, which continue to apply in the UK as part of retained EU law, also contribute to price transparency, with further requirements regarding how foreign exchange costs are communicated before a payment is made.

These regulations, amongst other things, are intended to enable consumers to make informed decisions when making use of payment services including where currency conversion is offered. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the relevant regulatory authority with responsibility for monitoring and enforcing these requirements. Should the FCA have concerns regarding firms' compliance with the requirements, it will take appropriate action as necessary.

**Financial Ombudsman Service****Zarah Sultana:**[\[62879\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Financial Ombudsman Service on streamlining their complaints procedure to reduce the time taken for customer cases to be resolved.

**John Glen:**

The Treasury regularly meets with the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) to discuss a variety of matters. For example, I meet regularly with the Chief Executive and the Chair of the FOS.

Improving timeliness and customer service is central to the FOS' plans for the future. The FOS' Board has recently commissioned an independent review of the FOS, to ensure that the FOS can continue to effectively meet the needs of its customers. The results of the review will be published in due course.

The FOS is an independent, non-governmental body. In view of this independence, it would not be appropriate for the Government to comment further on the detail of operational matters at the FOS.

**Freeports: Customs****Ben Bradley:**[\[62830\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which elements of freeport customs benefits might trigger the application of the OECD Code of Conduct for Clean Free Trade Zones and for what reason in UK freeports and freeport-based businesses.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

As part of the Freeport customs model, customs site operators are required to have Authorised Economic Operator (Safety and Security) (AEO(S)) (a well-recognised

international standard) or equivalent authorisation. Freeport businesses must also be authorised by HMRC before being permitted to operate and benefit from the customs facilitations. These authorisations support our robust commitment to the OECD Code of Conduct for Clean Free Trade Zones and ensure Freeports play their role in combating illicit trade, attract reputable businesses and protect consumers.

## ■ Import Duties: Tax Allowances

**Drew Hendry:** [62760]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of further extending the allowable time frames for Returned Goods Relief in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The grace period allowing goods located in the EU to return to Great Britain under Returned Goods Relief has already been extended, from 31 December 2021 to 30 June 2022. The Government has no plans to extend this further.

## ■ Income Tax

**Catherine West:** [59905]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Chapter 10 Part 2 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 on the obligations of employment agencies and umbrella companies.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Tax Information and Impact Note published in March 2021 sets out the expected impacts of the April 2021 reform of the off-payroll working rules:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021/off-payroll-working-rules-from-april-2021>

During the debate on the Finance Bill 2020, the Government committed to commission independent research into the short-term impacts of the reform by October 2021. That research has been commissioned. We will publish its findings once complete.

**Robert Halfon:** [62702]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate his Department has made of the financial effect of Income Tax reductions on the average person in work since 2010.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Personal Allowance has increased by nearly 50 per cent in real terms in the last decade, ensuring some of the lowest earners do not pay income tax. Compared to 2010-11, a typical basic rate taxpayer will pay over £800 less income tax in 2021-22 in real terms. The Personal Allowance is the highest basic personal tax allowance of all countries in the G20, and it remains one of the most generous internationally.

## ■ Money and Pensions Service

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[62717\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many bids were received by the Money and Pensions Service during their recent tendering process for regional debt advice services.

**John Glen:**

The Money and Pension Service's (MaPS) tendering process is an important step towards a more resilient debt advice sector and will drive better quality of advice and customer outcomes over the longer term. Information on the number of bids received as part of MaPS' procurement process for regional debt advice is commercially sensitive while that process is still ongoing, with it being set to conclude early in 2022.

However, MaPS has confirmed they have received sufficient bids to enable competition between bidders in the regional lot and therefore remain confident that the thorough procurement process will lead to a successful outcome in each region to enable strong support for people experiencing debt problems.

## ■ Property Development: Taxation

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[62868\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the revenues from the proposed Residential Property Developer Tax will be (a) made available to pay for fire safety remediation work in addition to the Building Safety Fund or (b) used to fund the existing £5.1 billion commitment.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Residential Property Developer Tax (RPDT) will raise at least £2 billion over the next decade to help fund the £5 billion package of funding that was announced in February 2021 for the removal of unsafe cladding from the highest risk buildings.

As announced in February 2021, the RPDT is one of two new revenue raising measures, alongside the Building Safety Levy, which will help to ensure that developers make a fair contribution to the costs of remediation.

## ■ Public Sector: Pay

**Catherine West:**

[\[62801\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to introduce a salary increase in line with inflation for (a) teachers and (b) other public sector workers.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Pay for most frontline workforces – including nurses, police officers, prison officers and teachers is set through an independent Pay Review Body process. The independent review bodies provide evidence-based advice to the government on levels of pay for their remit groups. In making recommendations, review bodies need to consider both the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people and the financial circumstances of the government. We will be seeking full recommendations and the award for 2022/23 will be announced next year.

**Catherine West:**

[\[62802\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the public sector pay freeze on the Government's ability to achieve a high-wage economy.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The temporary pay pause announced at SR20 was a difficult but necessary step in the face of huge uncertainty and the unprecedented impact COVID-19 had on the economy. This helped protect jobs at a time of crisis and ensure fairness between the private and public sectors. The private sector saw suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies: employment fell by 2.9% between Q1 2020 and Q1 2021, while over the same period employment in the public sector rose by 3%. 11.6m jobs, from 1.3m different employers, were furloughed. Public sector average weekly earnings rose by 4.5% in 2020/21 whilst private sector wage increases were a third lower than they were pre-crisis, at only 1.8%.

The solid recovery in the economy and labour market has meant that the government have been able to confirm at the Spending Review that public sector workers will see pay rises across the whole SR period (2022/23-2024/25).

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Catherine West:**

[\[59904\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake a further review of the Loan Charge.

**Lucy Frazer:**

A comprehensive independent review of the Loan Charge has already taken place. In September 2019, the Government commissioned Lord Morse to lead this Review.

Lord Morse's report was published in December 2019 and concluded that it was right for the Government to collect the tax due, but also recommended changes to how the Loan Charge works.

The Government accepted all but one of the Review's 20 recommendations, which is estimated to benefit over 30,000 individuals, removing 11,000 from the Loan Charge entirely.

**Catherine West:**

[\[59906\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of people seeking refunds as a result of the changes made by the Morse Review have been refused that refund by HMRC.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Following Lord Morse's Independent Loan Charge Review, the Government introduced legislation requiring the Commissioners of HMRC to establish a scheme to repay relevant Voluntary Restitution elements of disguised remuneration settlements.



These amounts were voluntary payments that taxpayers had agreed to make as part of settlements concluded before changes were made to the scope of the Loan Charge. Individuals and employers had until 30 September 2021 to apply to HMRC for a refund or waiver.

HMRC repays amounts that were paid in disguised remuneration scheme settlements and/or waives amounts of instalments due that have not yet been paid if certain conditions are met.

By 18 October 2021, HMRC had processed approximately 940 applications, of which approximately 740 had received either a repayment, a waiver or both. Approximately 200 of the applications processed were either invalid or ineligible.

## ■ Taxation: Fracking

**Catherine West:**

[\[59908\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to review all tax policy to ensure it does not incentivise oil and gas extraction.

**Helen Whately:**

Our domestic oil and gas industry produces the equivalent of around half of the UK's primary energy needs and will continue to play an important role as we transition to a net zero economy. The industry has paid around £375bn in production taxes to date and supports thousands of jobs across the UK, directly and in the industry's supply chains.

The Government places additional taxes on the extraction of oil and gas to ensure a fair return for the nation while also supporting the industry to address genuine costs through targeted tax reliefs, such as those to encourage the safe removal of infrastructure at the end of a field's life.

The Government keeps all taxes under review, and any changes are made in the round at fiscal events.

## WALES

## ■ Prisoners: Females

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[61206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on improving the support available to pregnant female prisoners in Welsh prisons.

**Simon Hart:**

I have regular discussions with my Cabinet colleagues on a wide range of subjects, including the provisions for female prisoners in Wales.

On 20 September, the Ministry of Justice published a new policy on pregnancy, Mother and Baby Units and maternal separation from children up to the age of two in



women's prisons, which contains a range of reforms for improving the care of pregnant women.

Women in prison are entitled to the same quality and range of healthcare services compared with that which they have access to in the community. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service is responsible for working in partnership with local healthcare providers to secure access to these services.

In addition, the Government announced last year that the first residential women's centre for female offenders will be in Wales. Having carefully considered the evidence, the Ministry of Justice has confirmed that the first residential women's centre will be located in South Wales. Officials have been undertaking a scoping exercise to understand how the needs of mothers with children might be met within the pilots.

#### ■ **Wales Office: Quarantine**

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[61105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many of his Department's ministers have been exempted from quarantine in a hotel after returning to the UK from a covid-19 red list country to which they have travelled for the purposes of conducting official business.

**Simon Hart:**

No Ministers from the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales have travelled to a covid-19 red list country for the purpose of conducting official business, therefore no Ministers have been exempted from quarantine.

### WORK AND PENSIONS

#### ■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Black History Month**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[60515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how her Department marked Black History Month 2021.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department recognises the importance of Black History Month in recognising the contributions that Black people have made to society, and the platform that this also provides in encouraging colleagues to share details of their personal lived experiences and Departmental Race priorities.

This year the Department has worked in collaboration with the DWP National Race Network to run in excess of 40 virtual staff events. These events have been open to everyone and have been supported by the Department's Permanent Secretary and Executive Team who have each facilitated a discussion on what Black History Month means to them and the Race actions they are progressing. All of the events have been recorded to ensure staff who may not have been able to participate can listen to the replay at a time more convenient time.

In addition to the large number of national Network events that have been scheduled, many of our business areas have also run localised activity. Examples of activities include: personal story telling; sponsorship and mentoring promotion; and communications to celebrate and raise awareness of inspirational Black people.

## ■ **Equal Pay: Disability**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[58845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps she has taken to tackle the disability pay gap.

**Chloe Smith:**

The National Disability Strategy, the Health and Disability Support Green Paper and the Health is Everyone's Business response together reflect this Government's commitment to supporting disabled people and those with long-term health conditions to live full and independent lives, including through employment and in work progression. A range of DWP initiatives are currently supporting disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work. These include the Work and Health Programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services.

## ■ **Social Security Benefits: Fraud**

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[58796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to protect people who are victims of identity theft and have had fraudulent benefit claims made in their name.

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[58799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to (a) identify and (b) investigate universal credit claims in the event that multiple claims are being paid to the same bank account.

**David Rutley:**

**COVID-19 saw an unprecedented surge in Universal Credit claims, demanding an extraordinary response from DWP to ensure the welfare safety net continued to catch all those in urgent need.**

**Whilst a small number of people deliberately misrepresented their circumstances or looked to exploit our response to the pandemic, the verification of claimants' identities remains at the core of our checks and we quickly introduced new and robust verification procedures following initial easements. Face to face interviews are now being re-established, subject to the latest COVID-19 advice.**

**Where fraud does occur, the Department takes the issue extremely seriously. Our Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service coordinates the detection of, and**

response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups, detecting and shutting down systematic attacks. Last year, this led us to suspend 152,000 Universal Credit claims and prevented £1.9 billion in benefits from being paid to people trying to scam the system.

Identity fraud is a complex issue, and it is not always possible to be definitive about every case, but our Enhanced Checking Service and our Serious Organised Crime teams disrupted or corrected over 298,000 claims (including the 152,000 mentioned above) in 2020-21.

We are not able to describe the robust processes we have in place, as to do so may compromise the effectiveness of our operations. However, DWP continues to work across Government to address this issue.

Where citizens allege that their identity has been used to make a fraudulent claim for Universal Credit, DWP considers each case on its own merits. Decisions are made on the strength of the evidence provided. If a claimant has been the victim of a scam, and has not benefited from it in any way, they will not be held liable for any debt. In these cases, we will seek to recover any losses from the perpetrator of any fraud.

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[60476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time between a claimant's benefits being (a) stopped and (b) reinstated was following allegations of fraud by her Department having been (i) dropped and (ii) successfully appealed against in each year since 2015, for (A) universal credit, (B) employment and support allowance and (C) job seeker's allowance.

**David Rutley:**

The Department does not hold this information. When we suspend benefits due to suspected fraud, we strive to resolve the case quickly, including reinstating benefits as soon as possible if fraud is no longer suspected.

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[60477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has a policy of compensating claimants for emotional distress in cases where allegations of fraud, which have resulted in benefit claims being stopped, have proven to be false.

**David Rutley:**

DWP has a discretionary special payment scheme. The policy and guiding principles can be viewed via this link: [Compensation for poor service: staff guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compensation-for-poor-service-staff-guide)

DWP can award consolatory payments to customers where DWP service failure has resulted in a serious impact on an individual's well-being.

Where an allegation of fraud results in an individual's benefits being suspended and subsequently reinstated following an investigation, DWP can consider additional financial redress, over and above any arrears that might be due, if DWP has:

- Maladministered the case in investigating the allegation and
- Disadvantaged the individual (caused an injustice or hardship) as a result of that maladministration.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Maria Eagle:** [\[62619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what was the average length of time after retirement and entitlement to state pension by which the first payment was made to recipients in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is not collated as a matter of normal business and is only available at disproportionate cost to the Department.

**Maria Eagle:** [\[62620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have experienced a delay in receipt of their first payment of State Pension in each of the last three years.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is not collated as a matter of normal business and is only available at disproportionate cost to the Department.

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[62625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have made additional National Insurance contributions to qualify for a full State Pension in the last 12 months.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is not collated as a matter of normal business and is only available at disproportionate cost to the Department.

Information about how awards of the new State Pension are calculated is available on the GOV.UK website, searching for “new State Pension explained”. In addition, the personalised digital “Check your State Pension” forecast service allows people to find out when they could receive their payments, how much they can get and what they can do to increase their amount, to enable people to find out what the changes mean for them. Since its launch in February 2016, over 26 million digital forecasts have been viewed.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: North West

**Maria Eagle:** [\[62621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have experienced a delay in receipt of their State Pension payment beyond what should have been their first payment date in (a) Garston and Halewood constituency, (b) Liverpool city region and (c) the North West of England.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is not collated as a matter of normal business and is only available at disproportionate cost to the Department.

**■ Universal Credit****Andrew Gwynne:****[62643]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that universal credit claimants who are paid every four weeks and who may on occasion receive a double payment in one assessment period are not penalised.

**David Rutley:**

Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit and the amount of Universal Credit paid each monthly assessment period will reflect, as closely as possible, the actual circumstances of a household in that assessment period, including any earnings reported by the employer. As Universal Credit is paid monthly, those who are also paid their earnings on a monthly basis will normally get one payment in each assessment period. For those who are paid differently such as four weekly the frequency of their pay will impact on the amount of Universal Credit they will receive.

Those who are paid four-weekly will normally get one payment in each assessment period and their Universal Credit will reflect the four weekly amount they are paid. For one assessment period a year they will receive two four-weekly payments. This is because there are 12 assessment periods a year and those who are paid four-weekly will receive 13 payments a year. As their income rises in that assessment period, Universal Credit is reduced and this is in line with the long standing general principle of means-tested benefits. However, whilst the Universal Credit amount will reduce in the assessment period where the household has received two payments of four-weekly earnings, they will still have the benefit of the higher income from their earnings .

The Universal Credit assessment period and payment structure are fundamental parts of its design. Universal Credit reflects payment patterns in the world of work. Ensuring similarities between paid employment and claiming benefits eliminates an important barrier which could prevent claimants from adjusting to paid employment.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Oil: North Sea

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[58521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications he has received for an oil exploration licence in the North Sea in each calendar year between 2014 and 2021; and how many and what proportion of those applications were (a) approved and (b) rejected.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 26 October 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Greg Hands:**

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) issue **licences** ~~grants to Licensees~~ to search and bore for, and get, petroleum in the seabed and subsoil under the area.

These figures are publicly available from the Oil and Gas Authority and in historic annual reports.