



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 4 November 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:37 P.M., 04 November 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Attorney General: Finance

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[67046\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what funding her Department has allocated to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and for what projects that funding has been allocated.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Attorney General's Office has not allocated any funding to Stonewall in the last 5 years

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[65481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) manufacturing sector, (b) finance sector, (c) hospitality sector, (d) retail sector and (e) long-term fiscal security of urban communities.

**Paul Scully:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every region and sector of the UK economy. That is why the Government provided businesses with an unprecedented support package of £352 billion, including grants, loans, business rates relief, VAT cuts and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. In July, we published the first ever Hospitality strategy: reopening, recovery, resilience, along with the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy, in support of city and town centre businesses.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer set out further steps to help the economy recover in the Autumn Budget. These included extending the Recovery Loan Scheme until June 2022, providing over £1 billion to ensure businesses can continue to access loans and other finance, and a 50% business rates discount for companies in retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors for the year 2022-23.

#### ■ Business: Telephone Services

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[67164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department receive feedback on calls to the Business Support Helpline.

**Paul Scully:**

Every contact to the Helpline, be it via telephone, webchat, email or social media channel, is surveyed on their satisfaction and impact of using the service.

Post-interaction with the service, contacts can grade the service from very satisfied to unsatisfied and can provide feedback on any aspect of the Helpline, including the use of [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) as this provides most of the traffic to the Helpline. They are also asked if they acted based on the advice given and if the advice, guidance, or signposting received have made any impact on their business.

BEIS also conducts customer service mystery shopping exercises and provides feedback to the Helpline.

Satisfaction rates for all levels of services are an average of 91% for this calendar year, above the contracted key performance indicator.

## ■ Electricity Generation

**Bill Wiggin:**

**[67082]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the planned electricity generating capacity of the UK is for (a) 2025, (b) 2030, (c) 2035 and (d) 2040; and how that energy will be (a) generated and (b) distributed.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government works closely with National Grid Electricity System Operator to ensure there is adequate capacity available to meet peak demand in a range of scenarios, now and in the future.

Each year how much capacity will be necessary to meet demand in the years ahead is evaluated. This assessment is used to determine targets for the annual Capacity Market auctions. Auctions held to date have secured the majority of Great Britain's capacity needs out to 2024/25. A further two Capacity Market auctions will take place later this winter which will secure electricity supply out to 2025/26.

The electricity network companies work closely with developers and the independent energy regulator, Ofgem, to ensure that the electricity system can accommodate new generation capacity.

## ■ Global Britain Investment Fund

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[64605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, para 4.74, whether the £1.4 billion announced for the Global Britain Investment Fund is from the (a) core research, (b) Innovation UK or (c) other Capital DEL funding stream.

**George Freeman:**

The Global Britain Investment Fund will be funded from a variety of sources, but funding will not come from either the Core Research or Innovate UK ringfences.



## ■ Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade: Rents

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[67165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of the hospitality and retail sectors on outstanding rent debt.

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[67166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take to support businesses with significant rent debt as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department regularly engages at both Ministerial and official level with businesses and representative organisations from the hospitality and retail sectors on a range of issues affecting these sectors including commercial rent debt.

Following a Call for Evidence launched in April and ongoing engagement with representatives of the hospitality and retail sectors on commercial rent debt, the Government will introduce legislation shortly, to support landlords and tenants resolve disputes relating to rent owed as a result of premises having been closed or having had business restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ■ Hynet North West

**Sarah Atherton:** [\[67317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits for Wrexham in relation to (a) job creation, (b) investment in the local economy and (c) trading opportunities of the Government's HyNet North West Hydrogen energy project.

**Greg Hands:**

Last month, the Government announced that HyNet has been sequenced onto 'Track-1' under the CCUS Cluster Sequencing process, for deployment in the mid-2020s. Amongst other things, this decision considered the cluster's potential to deliver benefits to the regional economy, including through the development of the hydrogen economy in both North Wales – including Wrexham – and the North West of England.

The Government estimates that CCUS could support up to 50,000 green jobs by 2030, along with over 9,000 supported by low carbon hydrogen. These jobs are set to be concentrated in the UK's industrial heartlands, including in North Wales.

## ■ New Businesses: Finance

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[67163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 September 2021 to Question 37473, on New Businesses: Females, how

much money his Department has provided to businesses through Start Up Loans; and what proportion of those loans have been provided to (a) women-owned businesses and (b) businesses owned by BAME people.

**Paul Scully:**

The number of Start Up Loans provided from March 2012 to the end of September 2021 was 88,253, with a total value of £790,096,004. Of these, 35,156 (40%) with a value of £291,330,446 (37%) were provided to women and 17,914 loans (20%) with a value of £154,023,924 (19%) were provided to entrepreneurs from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic background.

■ **Renewable Energy**

**Jerome Mayhew:**

[\[65505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to restart the Government's consultation into the use of a Regulated Asset Base model for renewables and low carbon energy generating assets.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government consulted on the use of a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model for nuclear in summer 2019, concluding that RAB was a credible model for large-scale nuclear projects. The Government introduced the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill on 26 October to establish the RAB model to fund new nuclear projects at a low cost of capital, saving consumers money. As set out in our response to the consultation, the Government will continue to consider whether a RAB model could be applied to other low carbon technologies, including transport and storage infrastructure for carbon dioxide (outlined in the Government's response to the carbon capture, usage and storage business models consultation).

■ **Roads: Summertime**

**Nickie Aiken:**

[\[67261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of adopting British Summer Time permanently on road traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government believes that the current daylight-saving arrangements represent the optimal use of the available daylight across the UK.

**CABINET OFFICE**

■ **Burlington House**

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[67043\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Answer of 15 March 2021 to Question 166296 on Burlington House, for

what reason the Guidance for the Disposal of Surplus Land, published by the Cabinet Office in 2017, was withdrawn in June 2021; and what has replaced that guidance.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Guidance for the Disposal of Surplus Land has been withdrawn as, in part, it has been overtaken by updated policy and standards, including the recently updated [Government Functional Standard for Property](#), published in September 2021.

## ■ Pharmaceuticals Direct

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[64523\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the compliance with the Special advisers: code of conduct of Ms Munira Mirza in respect of the award of contracts to Pharmaceuticals Direct; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Ellis:**

The award of contracts to Pharmaceuticals Direct was subject to a legal challenge that was set aside by the High Court in June 2021. The Government believes that the case was without merit and is contesting an appeal in relation to that decision, so it would not be appropriate to comment further on the matter at this time.

## ■ Protective Clothing: Civil Servants

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[64530\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information he holds on the number of occurrences civil servants in his Department raised concerns regarding the price paid for personal protective equipment from February 2020 to August 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Michael Ellis:**

Suppliers' offers were taken through a number of review stages by the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) team made up of civil servants. At various stages of the review process offers were declined as a result of prices being too high. HM Treasury put in place measures with which the Department of Health and Social Care had to comply in order to protect the taxpayer from mispricing. Measures included comparing the latest spot prices for each offer against market prices and benchmarking prices to make sure the Government was not overpaying.

## ■ Sustainable Development: Developing Countries

**Chris Law:**

[\[66211\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to progress the cross-Government policy coherence on the Sustainable Development Goals in 2021.

**Chris Law:**

[\[66212\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to monitor cross-government progress to the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as outlined in the 2021 Outcome Delivery Plans.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Cabinet Office supports the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, which has overall policy oversight for the Sustainable Development Goals, on domestic coordination and implementation by embedding Sustainable Development Goals into the Planning and Performance Framework. Outcome Delivery Plans were published for all government departments on 15 July 2021. These plans highlight how each department will support the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals for the financial year 21-22. Departments continue to report on performance against these plans as part of the financial year 21-22 Annual Reports and Accounts process.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Afghanistan: Refugees

**John Healey:**

[\[67057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghans and their families who are eligible for relocation to the UK through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy have been relocated to the UK since the end of Operation Pitting.

**James Heappey:**

The Government is strongly committed to fulfilling its responsibilities to current and former Locally Employed Staff (LES) in Afghanistan and the MOD-administered Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme is one of the most generous in the world. Around 2,000 people were relocated under the ARAP scheme before the start of Op PITTING with a further 5,000 evacuated during the operation itself. Subsequent to the cessation of Op PITTING 118 ARAP eligible individuals have been relocated to the UK. Our commitment to those who are eligible under ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure. The scheme remains open and we are working with international partners to establish routes for all those eligible for ARAP to relocate to the UK.

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[67160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support (a) Afghan nationals and (b) their dependents previously employed by the National Directorate of Security with relocation to the UK.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence-administered Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme was established to support former Locally Employed Staff (LES) and their dependants who are assessed to be at serious risk of threat to life as a result of

having been directly employed by the UK Government in Afghanistan. Our commitment to those who are eligible under the ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure. The scheme remains open and we are working with international partners to establish routes for all those eligible for ARAP to relocate to the UK.

Afghan nationals previously employed by the Afghan National Directorate of Security who have not worked directly for the UK, and their dependants, would not automatically qualify for relocation under ARAP. However, there is some discretion within the rules to consider, on a case-by-case and exceptional basis, those who worked in meaningful and prominent enabling roles alongside HMG. Approval in such cases is dependent upon the extent of the individual's relationship with HMG, the scale of their contribution to our mission, and an assessment of the risks they face.

#### ■ **Ajax Vehicles: General Dynamics**

**Chris Evans:**

[\[67133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the procurement of headsets for use by personnel in the Ajax armoured vehicles is included in the contract with General Dynamics.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The in-service headsets used by Ministry of Defence (MOD) personnel on Ajax are provided to General Dynamics by the MOD as Government Furnished Equipment.

#### ■ **Ajax Vehicles: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[64552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cause is of the noise and vibration issues affecting the Ajax programme.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the RT Hon. Member to the written statement (HCWS322) I laid in this House on Monday 18 October which provided a comprehensive update on the Armoured Cavalry (Ajax) Programme. Investigations continue into the noise and vibration issues affecting Ajax to determine the root causes.

**Attachments:**

1. Armoured Cavalry Programme: AJAX Update [HCWS 322.docx]

#### ■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[67079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27029, on Armed Forces: Recruitment, when he plans to provide an answer on the proportion of applicants to the (a) British Army, (b) Royal Navy and (c) Royal Air Force who were rejected in each of the last five years.

**Leo Docherty:**

I wrote to the hon. Member on 5 August 2021. A copy of my letter, and associated tables, was placed in the Library of the House at the same time.

A copy of my letter, and tables, is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Armed Forces [PQ 2021-22-27029-Min DPV.pdf]
2. Recruitment [20210714 Tri-Service Applications and Rejections.xlsx]

**■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences****Dan Jarvis:**[\[67161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made in the increase in the number of (a) sexual harassment and (b) rape complaints from girls under the age of 18 in the armed forces; and if he will make a statement.

**Leo Docherty:**

Allegations of rape made by female Service personnel under the age of 18 increased from one case in 2016 to two cases in 2021. Service Complaints alleging sexual harassment from within the same group decreased from one case to zero over the same period.

Sexual offending is not tolerated in the Armed Forces, and anyone failing to meet the standards required will be dealt with robustly, including being subject to police investigations and dismissal. Earlier this year, I announced an intention to publish a Defence-wide strategy for dealing with rape and serious sexual offences in the Service Justice System (SJS). The strategy will aim to reduce the prevalence and impact of rape and other serious sexual offending in the Armed Forces and improve the handling of those cases in the SJS.

The Ministry of Defence continues to tackle unacceptable behaviour. We are implementing the recommendations from the Wigston Review into inappropriate behaviour, and those made in the 2020 progress review led by Danuta Gray, which concluded that good progress had been made.

**■ Army: Hearing****Chris Evans:**[\[67131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel will be given hearing tests, subsequent to using headsets that have had a time limit put on them in the Warrior vehicles.

**Chris Evans:**[\[67132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel will be given hearing tests, subsequent to using headsets that have had a time limit put on them in the Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance family.

**Jeremy Quin:**

All Army personnel, regardless of role, are directed to have their hearing tested at least every 24 months, increasing to every 12 months for those in high risk roles. Personnel working on armoured vehicles fall into this high-risk category.

In response to concerns over the performance of some AFV headsets, the Army will assure compliance with the 12 monthly audiograms for all armoured vehicle users and will establish additional targeted sample surveillance (by vehicle type) to monitor the effectiveness of the safety constraints under the safety cases.

**■ Defence: Climate Change****John Healey:**[\[67056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 22 of his Department's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach published on 30 March 2021, what progress he has made on developing a set of defence climate assumptions for capability development.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Work is ongoing to deliver the activities covered in the strategic approach published in March. Our capability development processes already consider a broad set of environmental factors from the Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre research and analysis into climate change trends, and the implications from such, as part of their Global Strategic Trends (GST) series; to the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee now considering climate change and sustainability factors in the requirements setting.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Buildings****John Healey:**[\[64545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he was made aware of the presence of flammable cladding on buildings in the Defence Estate.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Grenfell Tower fire occurred on 14 June 2017. In response to concerns about building cladding and following advice from MHCLG, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) surveyed the defence estate to establish if any MOD-owned sleeping accommodation blocks over 18m in height were clad with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) during July-August 2017. This found that MOD had no buildings that met the criteria or that were clad with ACM.

In December 2018, the MHCLG issued an updated Advice Note which changed and extended the requirement, recommending that all buildings with any external cladding at a height in excess of 18m and containing residential accommodation should be assessed to ascertain the type of cladding used.

All relevant buildings on the Defence Estate were re-surveyed (surveys completed in July 2019), which identified 28 buildings (subsequently reduced to 27 buildings) which had an external wall system that contains combustible components and



required further investigation as there was no evidence to confirm a BR135 classification that was required under MHCLG Advice Note 14 to determine that the external wall system is safe.

As part of this process MOD Officials were first made aware that one Single Living Accommodation (SLA) block at HMS Nelson was not compliant with MHCLG guidance on cladding in July 2019. A Ministerial Submission was sent to all Defence Ministers, including the then Secretary of State for Defence on 18 July 2019, making them aware that one SLA block at HMS Nelson was not compliant with MHCLG guidance on cladding.

In November 2019, Defence Fire and Rescue (DFR), the Defence Fire Safety Regulator (DFSR) and Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) agreed that the 28 buildings identified should have remediation work including removal of cladding, and letters notifying the risk and need for removal were sent to the relevant Heads of Establishments in December 2019. DFR provided advice on how to operate the buildings to enable them to be safe to occupy. DFR, DFSR and DIO agreed that occupation of the buildings could continue until the appropriate measures were implemented subject to maintaining and adhering to the conditions within the buildings' Fire Risk Assessments.

Subsequent advice from external Fire Engineering Specialists has since advised that the buildings and cladding should be re-assessed to determine if the cladding needs to be removed.

As per consolidated advice issued by MHCLG in Jan 2020, all buildings containing sleeping accommodation (at any height) with external cladding are also being assessed.

## ■ NATO: Climate Change

**John Healey:**

**[67055]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 23 of his Department's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach published on 30 March 2021, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in NATO on further cooperation on (a) adapting to and (b) mitigating against the effects of climate change in each of the last 12 months.

**James Heappey:**

It is clear that the UK and NATO share the same ambition to reduce military emissions, adapt military capability, and recognise that climate change is a threat multiplier. These were the focus of both the Defence Secretary and the NATO Secretary General's comments at a COP26 Round Table side-event.

To deliver against this shared intent will require further discussions across all our allies and partners at all levels to ensure a coherent approach. As part of the forward looking NATO 2030 initiative, agreed by Alliance Leaders in June, the UK and its NATO Allies have agreed to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from



military activities and installations without impairing personnel safety, operational effectiveness and our deterrence and defence posture.

## ■ Shipbuilding

**John Healey:**

[\[67058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the refresh to the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 September 2021 to Question 43387.

## ■ Veterans: Compensation

**Crispin Blunt:**

[\[67040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many nuclear test veterans have submitted claims under any compensation scheme; and how many of those claims have been successful.

**Leo Docherty:**

The information requested is not held centrally. As a result, providing the answer would incur disproportionate cost.

**Crispin Blunt:**

[\[67041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which compensation schemes are open for nuclear test veterans of tests that took place prior to 2005.

**Leo Docherty:**

Nuclear Test Veterans who believe they have suffered ill health due to service may apply for no-fault compensation under the War Pensions Scheme. War Pensions are payable in respect of illness or injury as a result of service in the Armed Forces before 6 April 2005.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

## ■ Channel Four Television

**Simon Fell:**

[\[64743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 59963 on Channel Four Television, whether her Department has made an estimate of the annual value of the (a) intellectual property and (b) exports generated for independent producers by working with Channel 4.

**Julia Lopez:**

The government has not decided to sell Channel 4, or how Channel 4 may be sold.

We have consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 into the future. Our public consultation closed on 14 September. The government's view on policy

choices, including the publisher-broadcaster model, will be informed by the consultation responses, which we are still analysing.

Whatever decision is made about Channel 4's ownership model, any reforms will not compromise our commitment to the independent production sector or the wider creative economy.

If we were to decide to proceed with a sale, as with the sale of any government asset, it would need to meet stringent scrutiny processes to ensure value for money is achieved for the taxpayer.

**Damian Green:** [65344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she had made of the implications for her policies of the submission to the Government's consultation by ISBA and the Advertising Association that privatising Channel 4 would weaken competition in the TV advertising market.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:** [65345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of a possible sale of Channel 4 on (a) advertisers and (b) prospective consumers.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:** [65346]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to assess the potential impact on (a) advertisers and (b) prospective consumers of a possible sale of Channel 4.

**Julia Lopez:**

Channel 4 is one of this country's greatest broadcasting assets but we must think long-term about the challenges ahead and make sure it has the capital it needs to continue to contribute to the UK's success in public service broadcasting.

We have consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 into the future. Our public consultation closed on 14 September. We are carefully considering the views and evidence we have received, including from advertising stakeholders, to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

Whatever decision is made about Channel 4's ownership model, any reforms will not compromise our commitment to the wider creative economy.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:** [65347]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what is her assessment of the impact on the intellectual property of independent producers from a possible sale of Channel 4.

**Julia Lopez:**

Channel 4 has played an important role in supporting independent production in the UK. The sector is now flourishing and increasingly less reliant on income from UK PSBs. Total UK production sector revenues increased by more than 30% over the

five years to 2019, reaching £3.3 billion in 2019. The export market for UK content has continued to grow with the sector's international revenues exceeding £1 billion in 2019, 30% more than the previous year.

Channel 4's strengths in working with independent producers are precisely the kinds of attributes we would expect to be attractive to a buyer, and that we would expect any buyer to be likely to nurture and develop through new investment.

We have consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 for years to come. Our public consultation closed on 14 September. We are carefully considering the views and evidence we have received to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

Whatever decision we make about the future ownership model of Channel 4 will not compromise this government's commitment to the independent production sector and to the wider creative economy.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

**[65348]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential impact on (a) inclusiveness and (b) diversity of a possible sale of Channel 4.

**Julia Lopez:**

Our consultation document outlines that the government sees the great value delivered to society through the obligations placed on Channel 4 to broadcast content appealing to diverse audiences. We have sought views on whether to retain or increase such obligations through our consultation.

We consider that Channel 4's ability to reach a diverse range of audiences is a strength to be celebrated and maintained into its future, and that this is not at odds with private investment - in fact, this is an important facet of Channel 4's brand that is likely to be an attractive asset to nurture and develop for any potential buyer.

We have consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 for years to come.

Our public consultation closed on 14 September. We are carefully considering the views and evidence we have received to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

**[65349]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what regulatory barrier prevents non-public broadcasters adopting any or all of Channel 4's obligations and methods of operating.

**Julia Lopez:**

The government wants Channel 4 to remain a public service broadcaster. Public service broadcasters - publicly *and* privately owned - have both benefits and obligations. Our consultation document outlines that we see the value in many of these obligations.

Channel 4's ability to make distinctive content, and its work with independent producers are precisely the strengths we would protect and expect any potential buyer to look to develop and nurture, should we decide to proceed with a sale. We do not therefore subscribe to a false binary choice between public service remit and privatisation.

Indeed, we already have two privately-owned - and very successful - public service broadcasters in the examples of ITV and Channel 5. Both continue to deliver public service objectives.

## ■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation

**Simon Fell:**

[\[64744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 59963 on Channel 4, what estimate she has made of the transfer of value if Channel 4 moves from a publicly owned not-for-profit body to a privatised broadcaster if the publisher-broadcaster model is removed.

**Julia Lopez:**

Channel 4 has played an important role in supporting independent production in the UK. The sector is now flourishing and increasingly less reliant on income from UK Public Service Broadcasters. Independent production has grown exponentially from an estimated worth of £850 million in 2003 to in excess of £3 billion in 2019, driven in particular by the boom in international revenues with 158% growth between 2014 and 2019. In 2014, international revenue accounted for 19% of total producer revenue, whereas in 2019 it accounted for 38%.

We have consulted on the best ownership model to support Channel 4 for years to come. We are carefully considering the views and evidence we have received to inform the government's policy-making and final decision. Whatever decision we make will not compromise this government's commitment to the independent production sector.

## ■ Exercise

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[64742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to embed physical activity over the course of people's lives.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Sports and physical activity are crucial for our mental and physical health. The Chief Medical Officer is clear that being physically active is important to long-term health and crucial for keeping people healthy. That is why we made sure that people could exercise throughout the national restrictions and provided an unprecedented £1 billion of financial support to sport and leisure organisations during the pandemic.

The government launched its sports strategy, Sporting Future in 2015 and we've achieved a huge amount since then. Sport England has allocated over £1.5 billion to nearly 5,000 organisations across the UK. Sport England has also published its new

ten year strategy which focuses on driving up activity levels and helping to improve physical and mental health. We want to see physical activity embedded in people's lives, with children doing at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day, and adults 2.5 hours a week.

At the recent Spending Review, £205 million was announced to build or transform up to 8,000 state-of-the-art community football pitches and multi-use sports facilities across the UK. Earlier this month, we announced £30 million for PE teacher training and to open up school facilities to provide access to the wider community. This was in addition to, £30 million package to renovate 4,500 park tennis courts across the country.

The government believes these steps will help ensure that everyone can keep active throughout their lives.

### ■ **Football Index: Compensation**

**Claire Hanna:**

**[67300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a full redress scheme for losses incurred by customers of Football Index affected by its collapse.

**Chris Philp:**

The government appreciates the significant impact that the collapse of the novel gambling product Football Index had on former customers. Administration proceedings for BetIndex, the company which operated Football Index, are continuing, and are looking at the assets and liabilities of the operator and what is owed to customers. It is likely that this process will result in some amounts being reimbursed to creditors. There is no compensation scheme for losses caused by a gambling firm ceasing to operate and the government does not think it would be appropriate to use public funds for these purposes.

### ■ **Gambling: Video Games**

**Ronnie Cowan:**

**[65450]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has a timetable for announcing the regulation of loot boxes; and whether that regulation will required primary legislation.

**Julia Lopez:**

We ran a call for evidence from September to November 2020 to examine concerns around loot boxes in video games. The government is continuing to evaluate the evidence received from over 30,000 responses to the call for evidence, along with an independent Rapid Evidence Assessment commissioned from the InGAME research and innovation centre. Additionally, we have continued a dialogue with the games industry to develop effective and proportionate solutions in response to issues identified from the evidence. The government response outlining planned next steps is due to be published in the coming months.

**■ Internet: Access**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[67116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department is taking steps to support the simplification of terms and conditions required by digital and technology companies when accessing their websites or applications.

**Chris Philp:**

Under upcoming Online Safety legislation, companies that enable sharing of user-generated content and search services will need to create clear and accessible terms of service for how they will protect users from harmful content on their platform, and enforce these consistently. The draft Online Safety Bill is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny and the government will introduce it to Parliament as soon as parliamentary time allows.

**■ National Railway Museum: Finance**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[64663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his announcement on funding for York's National Railway Museum in his Autumn Budget 2021 statement had been announced previously.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[64664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding will be allocated to the National Railway Museum as a result of the Autumn Budget 2021.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The inclusion of the National Railway Museum in the Autumn Budget Statement is confirmation that the museum will be awarded funding in the coming spending period, as part of the Cultural Investment Fund.

In total, the Science Museum Group will receive an £18.58m contribution from the government towards *Vision 2025*, the transformation of the National Railway Museum into a modern and accessible museum at the heart of the *York Central* redevelopment.

**■ Third Sector: Insurance**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[67192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2021 to Question 56464 on Voluntary Organisations: Finance, what steps he has taken to ensure that insurance products are available to civil society organisations that do not exclude cover for covid-19 or other pandemics.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As stated in my answer of 29 October 2021, our work to monitor the impact of the pandemic on the sector has not raised serious cross-sectoral concerns about the availability of insurance.

The government has taken action to address insurance challenges - such as the Live Events Reinsurance Scheme referenced in my previous answer - which can benefit civil society organisations, but has not been specifically designed to respond to needs of civil society organisations.

The government will continue to work with sector representatives and listen to concerns raised regarding the impact of the pandemic.

## ■ Voluntary Organisations: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2021 to Question 59855 on Voluntary Organisations: Finance, what policies he is developing to enable charities to thrive in the future.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2021 to Question 59855 on Voluntary Organisations: Finance, what steps his Department is taking to enable charities to work with the Government; and what the share priorities are on which charities and Government will work together.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Enabling charities and other civil society organisations to thrive now and in the future is a DCMS priority.

The government is actively working with partners in the sector to shape a forward-looking agenda to support a strong and resilient civil society. These plans will be reviewed and finalised through standard departmental business planning processes over the coming weeks. Further details will be made available in due course.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Allergies: Schools

**Catherine West:**

[\[64701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of, and enhance, allergy management in schools.

**Will Quince:**

Under Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014, schools have a duty to support pupils at their school with medical conditions. This could include ensuring that a child with an allergy is able to eat a school lunch.

The Food Information Regulations 2014 requires all food businesses including school caterers to show the allergen ingredient information for the food they serve. This makes it easier for schools to identify the food that pupils with allergies can and cannot eat.



From October 2021, the Food Information Regulations include new requirements for the labelling of allergens on prepacked for direct sale foods. These are foods which are packaged on the premises before the consumer orders them.

Updated allergen guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>.

## ■ Apprentices: Taxation

**Emma Hardy:** [64714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what process exists allowing for access to the names of all private companies sharing their apprenticeship levy funds with public bodies.

**Emma Hardy:** [64715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what suitability criteria are used to assess private companies before their apprenticeship levy funds are transferred to public bodies.

**Emma Hardy:** [64716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department makes of potential conflicts of interest arising from private companies transferring levy funds to public bodies.

**Alex Burghart:**

Our reforms to apprenticeships have put employers in the driving seat, supporting them to choose and access high-quality training to meet their skills needs now and in the future.

We continue to make improvements to the levy transfer system to make it easier for large employers to make full use of their levy funds and support starts in their supply chain, sector or local area, and to support more employers, including small and mid-sized enterprises, to take on new apprentices.

Apprenticeship levy transfers can only be used to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment. The employer transferring their funds is not responsible for any aspect of the apprenticeship they are supporting, such as the apprentice's wages or their employment. The employer receiving the transferred funds has full responsibility for ensuring that the apprenticeship is of high quality and meets our funding policy and conditions.

In addition to allowing levy-paying employers to specify an employer they wish to transfer funds to, our improvements to the levy transfers system now enable employers to advertise funding pledges. Employers can pledge transfer funds to support a specific type or level of apprenticeship, or an apprenticeship in a particular sector or region. It is for employers, both in the public and private sectors, to choose whether to apply for these funding pledges, and for the pledging employer to decide who to transfer their funds to.



We do not publish data on employers that have sent or received transfers of levy funds.

## ■ Arts: Finance

**Giles Watling:**

[\[65496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to introduce an arts premium following the conclusion of the Spending Review 2021.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government is committed to high-quality education for all pupils, and arts and music are integral to this. With the significant impact of COVID-19 on children's learning, the department's priorities have inevitably had to focus on education recovery over the next 3 years.

The department will continue to invest around £115 million per annum in cultural education over the next three years, through our music, arts and heritage programmes. This includes Music Education Hubs, the Music and Dance Scheme, British Film Academy, the Bridge organisations, and working closely with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Arts Council England and others.

With the real terms per pupil increases to core school funding and the additional £1 billion new funding announced specifically for recovery, schools will continue to have the flexibility to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum and enrichment activities, including in the arts.

## ■ Arts: T-levels

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[64695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, in the context of the Jewellery making pathway for the Craft and Design T-Level, what assessment he has made of the number of jewellery makers able to offer industry placements to cover all regions of England.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[64696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Ceramics pathway for the Craft and Design T-Level, what estimate he has made of the number of ceramics studios able to offer industry placements to cover all regions of England.

**Alex Burghart:**

T Levels are based on the same occupational standards as apprenticeships and the outline content is designed by panels of employers, industry experts and education providers, working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. In developing the outline content for the Craft and Design T Level, which is rolling out in September 2023, the T Level panel took account of a number of factors when determining the occupational specialisms of jewellery making and ceramics making, including deliverability and likely demand from employers and students.

The department is investing in direct support to employers and providers to increase the number of industry placements available for all T Levels, across all regions. We

have invested over £200 million since the 2018/19 academic year to help providers build their capacity and networks with employers, and we are engaging directly with employers through the National Apprenticeship Service to develop a pipeline of industry placements. We are also working with key intermediaries to develop innovative ways to stimulate the small and mid-size enterprises market, which includes targeting specific industries and geographical regions, and we have established a T Level employer ambassador network to engage with others in their industries on T Levels and industry placements.

There is also a comprehensive package of support available for employers, which offers online guidance, webinars and direct hands-on support to help them prepare for industry placements, and we are further developing our communications materials to continue to raise the profile of T Levels to employers. We will continue to monitor the availability of industry placements across the country to ensure that all T Level students have a high-quality placement.

### ■ Assessments: Coronavirus

**Kim Leadbeater:**

**[63923]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what arrangements are in place for pupils sitting forthcoming examinations who have not had access to wifi and have subsequently missed lessons during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has provided support for over 110,000 families to get online through uplifts in mobile data and 4G wireless routers. On 26 August 2021, we announced funding to support schools and colleges in providing internet access for disadvantaged pupils whose face-to-face education is disrupted during the Autumn term. The department is also continuing to provide 4G wireless routers for pupils without internet access.

Alongside a strong core funding settlement which will see core schools funding rise by £4.7 billion by the 2024-25 financial year compared to existing plans, the department has committed an additional £1.8 billion of recovery funding, bringing total investment for specific education recovery interventions to almost £5 billion.

This latest investment is targeted at those we know will need it most; delivering a universal uplift of hours for those with the least time left in education, in 16-19 settings, as well as £1 billion of flexible funding for schools. This follows the evidence-backed investment in tutoring and training for teachers, that is being delivered now.

The department recognises that those students taking exams next year have had considerable disruption to their education and, together with Ofqual, we have confirmed adaptations to exams to take account of that. The package of adaptations includes a choice of topics or content on which students will be assessed in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history, and geography, and advance information of the focus of exams in all other GCSEs and all AS and A level subjects to support

revision. These changes will apply to assessments and exams in summer 2022 and GCSE English language and maths exams in November 2022.

Ofqual's approach on grading for 2022 also recognises the disruption experienced by students taking exams next year. Ofqual has confirmed 2022 will be a transition year for grading and has set out its plans for grades to be set around a mid-point between 2021 and pre-COVID grades.

In addition, there is currently a series of autumn exams taking place that are optional for students. The autumn 2021 exam series will provide an opportunity for students who may wish to improve their teacher assessed grade to sit an exam. Ofqual's consultation considered the fairest possible arrangements for exams this autumn.

Ofqual announced the grading arrangements for the autumn 2021 exam series on 30 September 2021. Exam boards will seek to align autumn 2021 grading with summer 2021. This is the same approach as in autumn 2020, when grading was aligned to summer 2020.

## ■ Brain: Injuries

**Chris Bryant:**

[\[67085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Acquired Brain Injury Card for people under 18 years old produced by the Child Brain Injury Trust, what steps officials in his Department have taken with officials in the (a) Department for Health and Social Care and (b) Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities to ensure that that injury card is promoted in (i) schools, (ii) hospitals and (iii) local authorities.

**Will Quince:**

We welcome the introduction of the Acquired Brain Injury Card and feel that offering young people this personal Card is a helpful in supporting their independence and to help others to better understand the potential impact of their injury. It is up to individual schools to choose what to promote in their schools.

## ■ Breakfast Clubs

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[64691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing breakfast provisions in schools for children in poverty.

**Will Quince:**

The department knows that it is important for pupils to start the day with a nutritious breakfast. Between March 2018 and July 2021, the National School Breakfast Programme for schools in disadvantaged areas has supported up to 2,450 schools to establish and develop breakfast clubs, and to sustain them in the longer term. We are now investing up to £24 million in a new two year contract to continue our support for school breakfast provision until July 2023.

The department recognises that healthy breakfast clubs can play an important role in ensuring children from all backgrounds have a healthy start to their day so that they

enhance their learning potential. An independent evaluation by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, published by the Education Endowment Foundation, found that supporting schools to run a free of charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered, on average, 2 months of additional progress for pupils in key stage 1 with moderate to low security. The evaluation is available here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast>.

A 2017 evaluation commissioned by the department also found that schools perceived important benefits from having a breakfast club, including improving concentration and behaviour in class. This is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-in-high-deprivation-schools>.

Throughout the current contract, the department will be working with our provider, Family Action, to monitor different aspects of the current programme, including the benefits the programme is having on pupils who are attending. We will consider the best opportunities to share information on the programme as it progresses.

#### ■ Breakfast Clubs : Finance

**Catherine West:**

**[63833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will allocate additional funding to support breakfast clubs in schools in England.

**Catherine West:**

**[63834]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of breakfast clubs on children's performance in schools.

**Will Quince:**

The government is committed to continuing support for school breakfast clubs and we are investing up to £24 million to continue our national programme for the next two years. This funding will support around 2,500 schools in disadvantaged areas, meaning that thousands of children from low income families will be offered free nutritious breakfasts to better support their attainment, wellbeing and readiness to learn.

The department recognises that healthy breakfast clubs can play an important role in ensuring children from all backgrounds have a healthy start to their day so that they enhance their learning potential. An independent evaluation by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, published by the Education Endowment Foundation, found that supporting schools to run a free of charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered an average of 2 months' additional progress for pupils in Key Stage 1 with moderate to low security. This evaluation can be found here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast>.

In addition, a 2017 evaluation commissioned by the department also found that schools perceived important benefits from having a breakfast club, including improving concentration and behaviour in class. More information can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/603946/Evaluation\\_of\\_Breakfast\\_Clubs\\_-\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603946/Evaluation_of_Breakfast_Clubs_-_Final_Report.pdf).

Throughout the current contract we will be working with our provider, Family Action, to monitor different aspects of the current programme, including the benefits the programme is having on pupils who are attending. We will consider the best opportunities to share information on the programme as it progresses.

## ■ Children in Care: Death

**Sarah Champion:** [64629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children died while living in (a) independent accommodation and (b) semi-independent accommodation in each of the last three years; and if he will publish (i) an age breakdown and (ii) the names of the local authorities that were corporate parents of those children.

**Sarah Champion:** [64630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children suffered serious harm while living in (a) independent accommodation and (b) semi-independent accommodation in each of the last three years, and if he will publish (i) an age breakdown and (ii) the names of the local authorities that were corporate parents of those children.

**Sarah Champion:** [64631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children went missing while living in (a) independent accommodation and (b) semi-independent accommodation in each of the last three years; and if he will provide an age breakdown of those children.

**Sarah Champion:** [64632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of looked after children living in (a) independent accommodation and (b) semi-independent accommodation in each of the last three years were placed within 20 miles of their home.

**Sarah Champion:** [64633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of looked after children living in (a) independent accommodation and (b) semi-independent accommodation in each of the last three years were in full-time education.

**Will Quince:**

The department does not collect information on the educational activity of looked after children.

Information on the proportion of looked after children living in independent or semi-independent accommodation within 20 miles of their home is shown in the attached table, Table A. Figures on the number of looked after children living in independent or semi-independent accommodation who went missing is shown in the attached table, Table B. More general information on children looked after in England by placement type, locality and distance and those who went missing is contained in the Children looked after in England statistics release, which is available here: <https://explore->

[education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions](https://education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions). Figures for the reporting year ending 31 March 2021 will be published in November 2021.

Information in the 2020 Annual Report of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel contained statistics showing in the 2020 calendar year that there were 43 incidents of serious harm involving looked after children. However, no further breakdowns were published in this report.

The number of children looked after who died whilst in independent or semi-independent accommodation during 2018-2020 was 22. All children were aged 16 or over. Due to the small numbers involved this figure cannot be broken down by individual age or local authority or into separate years to protect confidentiality.

**Attachments:**

1. 64629\_to\_64633\_table [64629\_30\_31\_32\_33\_locality\_and\_missing\_children.xls]

■ **Children: Disability**

**Ed Davey:**

**[65358]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the finding of the Disabled Children's Partnerships' report, entitled Left Behind, that 40 per cent of local authorities have reduced respite care for families during the covid-19 outbreak, what plans he has to provide dedicated additional funding for respite care for families with disabled children.

**Will Quince:**

I refer the hon. Member for Kingston and Surbiton, to the answer given by me, on 20 October 2021 to Question [56976](#).

■ **Department for Education: Stonewall**

**Tim Loughton:**

**[61056]**

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

**Michelle Donelan:**

Please find attached an Excel file summarising payments that the Department for Education has made to Stonewall. The data has been provided on a financial year basis and covers 2017-18 through to 2020-21. The majority of the spend incurred was not by the Department for Education, but instead the Government Equalities Office.

Expenditure data for the 2016-17 financial year is subject to an ongoing data migration process from a previous service provider and is therefore not accessible at this time.

The Department for Education has an internal five year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to create a department where everyone is able to bring their whole self to work and where honesty, challenge and innovation are encouraged and valued. By forming these relationships and spending, the department is helping to create an

environment where all staff, regardless of their protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (including but not limited to sexual orientation or gender identity), are supported and do not face discrimination, and supports the department to fulfil its requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**Attachments:**

1. 61056\_table [61056\_table\_showing\_stonewall\_payments.xlsx]

■ **Disability: Children**

**Ed Davey:**

**[65359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential cost savings generated by funding additional early intervention support for disabled children and families.

**Will Quince:**

At the Budget, the government announced a significant £500 million package to improve support for families. This includes an additional £200 million - a 40% real-terms uplift by the 2024-25 financial year – for the Supporting Families Programme to enable local authorities and their partners to provide help earlier and secure better outcomes for up to 300,000 families across all aspects of their lives.

The Supporting Families programme works with the most vulnerable children and families, around a third of whom have physical and/or learning disabilities, and this investment will provide local authorities with additional funding to assist this group.

The Supporting Families programme evaluation shows that the programme offers indirect savings to the public sector of £1.51 for every £1 spent and wider economic benefits of £2.28 for every £1 spent, including a reduction in the number of children coming into care, children and youth offending and Jobseekers Allowances claims.

The Supporting Families evaluation cost benefit analysis does not focus on individual groups supported by the Programme, so we cannot disaggregate the savings for specific groups such as children and families with disabilities.

■ **Education: Finance**

**Peter Kyle:**

**[64684]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of education recovery funding to tackle cost pressures incurred by schools as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Helping children and young people to catch up is a key priority which is why, in this Spending Review, the department has announced a further £1.8 billion in dedicated support for education recovery. This takes government investment to just under £5 billion for an ambitious, multi-year approach for education recovery across early years, schools and 16-19.



The department has consistently targeted recovery funding where the evidence tells us it will be most effective, on tutoring and teaching, £650 million has already gone directly to schools via our catch-up premium, with more than £300 million going direct to schools this academic year via the recovery premium. Our recent announcement includes an additional £1 billion recovery premium for schools over the next two academic years (2022/23 and 2023/24).

Direct recovery funding comes on top of wider increases to early years, schools and college funding. Schools will receive an additional £4.7 billion in core funding in the 2024-25 financial year, including £1.6 billion in the 2022-23 financial year on top of already planned increases from the 2019 Spending Review, which is equivalent to a total cash increase of £1,500 per pupil between 2019-20 and 2024-25 financial years.

Additional funding via the Covid Exceptional Costs fund has also been provided to schools, which reimbursed them for costs identified as the biggest barrier to operating as they needed to between March and July 2020, to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers. The department has paid schools £139 million for all claims within the published scope of the fund across both application windows.

## ■ Parents: Coronavirus

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[63686]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on parents.

**Will Quince:**

The department recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak has been challenging for pupils and their families. The department has been regularly surveying parents and carers of school pupils throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. This has helped to inform our response on a range of issues and is also helping to shape our education recovery. The reports from these surveys were published on 29 October 2021 on gov.uk and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-and-pupil-panel-omnibus-surveys>.

The department also commissioned a bespoke sub-study as part of the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) which explored the experiences of the children and their parents during the COVID-19 outbreak. This has helped to inform our response on a range of issues. It is important to note that while this report documents the experiences of children and their parents in the SEED study covered by the COVID-19 outbreak, the department cannot conclude from these analyses that their experiences were as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, these findings cannot be used to evaluate specific government policies including those in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The report from this survey was published on 29 October 2021 on gov.uk and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-development-coronavirus-covid-19-study>.



Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak the department has worked to help parents support their children's education. The department has published guidance that sets out what they need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges. This guidance is updated regularly and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>. The guidance includes links to online resources to aid parents in supporting their child's mental health and wellbeing as the department acknowledges that some children may be experiencing feelings of anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

During periods of restricted attendance, schools have remained open to both vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers, ensuring that those parents who work in key sectors could continue to provide vital services. For those pupils learning from home the department recognises the challenges this has presented to parents and have published guidance which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-your-childrens-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>. To support access to remote education, the department has distributed over 1.35 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people as part of a £400 million investment. The department has ensured that children who usually receive benefits-related free school meals have had access to this support during periods of restricted attendance and provided a National Voucher Scheme to support eligible pupils required to stay at home. Over £450 million of voucher e-codes had been redeemed into supermarket gift cards for families during this period. The department has continued to ensure that eligible pupils are offered good quality lunch parcels when they are required to stay home.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[66194]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the resilience of the private, voluntary and independent nursery sector since the cessation of support under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Will Quince:**

The department has monitored the sufficiency of childcare and resilience of the private, voluntary and independent nursery sector throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, through regular attendance data collection and monitoring the open or closed status of providers. The department has continued this through this autumn term to monitor any change since the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Local authorities are responsible for stewardship of local childcare markets and the department also discusses sufficiency of provision in our regular conversations with them. Local authorities are not currently reporting any significant sufficiency or supply issues and the department has not seen any significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place, either this term or since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020. Sufficient early education and childcare

places continue to be accessible to those parents that want it and take up of those places is stable giving providers certainty of income.

The department has also featured questions about the use, and withdrawal of, CJRS within our most recent parent and provider polls, which are being conducted this term and may provide information about any longer-term effect. The results of these polls are expected to be published towards the end of autumn term 2021 and in early spring term 2022 respectively.

## ■ Pupils: Absenteeism

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[60459]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the impact of pupil absences from school as a result of covid-19 on their education.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Children and young people's education has been significantly disrupted as a result of COVID-19. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

Ofsted has found that, despite remote education being offered, learning is still being lost when pupils and students have to self-isolate, particularly when this happens repeatedly. This has been reinforced by the World Health Organisation (WHO), whose updated recommendations are clear that measures should be implemented that protect in-person schooling in this academic year. More information is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1000025/Evidence\\_Summary\\_-\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000025/Evidence_Summary_-_July_2021.pdf).

Our priority is for schools to deliver face-to-face, high-quality education to all pupils. As COVID-19 becomes a virus that we learn to live with, there is now an imperative to reduce the disruption to children and young people's education. School attendance is mandatory for all pupils. Data published on 19 October shows that on 14 October nearly all state-funded schools were open and attendance in all state-funded schools was 90%, up from 89.5% on 30 September.

We have a comprehensive attendance strategy that has been implemented since the beginning of this academic year to ensure that any absence as a result of COVID-19 is minimised, and we are continuing to closely monitor absence levels and trends to ensure a focus on attendance remains throughout the rest of this academic year.

We know the COVID-19 outbreak has caused particular challenges for some children who may already have been disengaged from education. That is why we have been working closely with local authorities and schools to help them re-engage pupils, including providing best practice advice.

Helping children and young people to catch up on learning missed due to COVID-19 remains a top priority of this government, which is why, in addition to an ambitious wider settlement for schools and 16 to 19 settings announced in the recent Spending

Review, we are investing nearly £5 billion in education recovery. This includes £1.5 billion for a national tutoring revolution, a £1 billion multi-year 'Recovery Premium' building on the £950 million already invested so schools can deliver evidence-based interventions based on pupil needs, summer schools, extra time in 16 to 19 education, and 500,000 training opportunities for school teachers and early years practitioners.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[63765]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to (a) support pupils who continue to experience periods of absence from their schools and (b) mitigate the impact that those periods of absence may have on their end of year results.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Regular attendance at school is vital for pupils' education, wellbeing and long term development. Settings have the flexibility to prioritise recovery support for pupils most in need, guided by the level of individual need and led by the evidence of what works to improve outcomes, which may include attendance. Funding to support this includes the recovery premium for this academic year, and the £1 billion announced at the spending review for the next two academic years.

Although attendance is mandatory, there will be specific instances where pupils who test positive for COVID-19 or present with COVID-19 symptoms cannot attend school on-site but are well enough to learn from home. Where remote education is needed for those pupils, schools are expected to offer pupils 3-5 hours of remote education per day, dependent on key stage, which should include recorded or live direct teaching alongside time for pupils to complete independent work. A comprehensive package of support continues to be available to schools to help them meet our expectations for remote education, accessible at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>.

It is the government's firm intention that examinations and assessments should go ahead next year. However, we recognise that students may continue to face disruption to their education due to uncertainty about the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. For exams in 2022, we have confirmed a package of measures to help mitigate any disruption, which includes adaptations to GCSE, AS and A level examinations.

The package of adaptations includes a choice of topics or content on which students will be assessed in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history, and geography, and advance information of the focus of exams in all other GCSEs and all AS and A level subjects to support revision.

Ofqual's approach on grading for 2022 also recognises the disruption experienced by students taking exams next year. Ofqual has confirmed 2022 will be a transition year for grading and has set out its plans for grades to be set around a mid-point between 2021 and pre-COVID grades.

**■ Refugees: Afghanistan**

**Stuart C McDonald:** [\[67175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of Afghan children who have been relocated under Operation Warm Welcome are now in school.

**Stuart C McDonald:** [\[67176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support the Government has put in place to ensure that Afghan children who have arrived in the UK under Operation Warm Welcome are able to access a school place; and by what date all of those children will be in school.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Children who have recently arrived from Afghanistan are entitled to full time education and one of the department's 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 where Afghan families reside to ensure they can access education as soon as possible.

The department is urgently making available additional funds to local authorities to provide educational support and help Afghan children and young people settle into their local schools and communities.

The department cannot set an end date as Afghan families continue to come into the UK. We are working with departments across government and local authorities to ensure the availability of school places are taken into account as new families arrive and are settled into the country.

**■ Schools: Admissions**

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[64718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times he has been received representations from local authorities requesting powers to compel schools to take on pupils who are out of school.

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[64719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average response time from his Department is to local authorities that have requested powers to compel schools to take on pupils who are out of school.

**Anneliese Dodds:** [\[64720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many successful requests there have been from local authorities for powers to compel schools to take on pupils who are out of school.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

All children are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Local authorities have a duty to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age but are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

If it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they have the power to begin procedures for issuing a school attendance order. The order will name a school at which the parent is required to register their child.

Where a pupil is not regularly attending school, local authorities and schools have a range of measures they can put in place to support school attendance.

In the 2020/21 academic year, local authorities made three requests for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, to issue a direction to comply with a school attendance order for academy schools. None of these requests resulted in a direction to admit. The time taken to issue a decision on these cases ranged from 4 days to 63 days, owing to the complexity of the individual cases.

## ■ Schools: Assessments

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[63677]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made assessment of the steps that will be required to help ensure that examinations in 2022 happen in the normal school setting, in the event of rising covid-19 cases.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government has made it a national priority that schools and colleges should continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak.

All schools have a range of measures in place to manage COVID-19 transmission day to day. This includes ventilation and hygiene measures for schools and testing for pupils in Year 7 and above.

Schools must continue to comply with health and safety law and put in place proportionate control measures, such as keeping occupied spaces well ventilated. Schools must regularly review, update and monitor their risk assessments, outlining what they would do if children or staff test positive and how they would operate if measures needed to be stepped back up to break chains of transmission.

The government is committed to ensuring the safety of all pupils, which is why CO2 monitors have begun to be provided to state-funded nurseries, schools and further education colleges. This has been backed by £25 million in government funding.

There is of course continued uncertainty about the path of the COVID-19 outbreak, including whether further disruption may occur over the course of the 2021/22 academic year. The department believes it should be possible for students to take exams safely next year, supported by the permitted adaptations. This includes advance information on the focus of some of the questions in most GCSE and all A/AS level subjects which have exams. Advance information will be deployed by 7

February to support revision. The department retains the flexibility to deploy it earlier if there is significant further disruption to education.

The department does understand that contingency arrangements are also needed to deal with the unlikely event that exams cannot go ahead fairly or safely. We and Ofqual have proposed teacher assessed grades (with changes) as the main contingency option – the consultation closed 13 October 2021 and the outcome will be announced shortly.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[63764]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what further steps he plans to take to increase (a) ventilation and (b) mask wearing in schools in the context of high covid-19 infection rates.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The day-to-day measures in place in nurseries, schools and colleges are based on the latest scientific advice and strike a balance between managing transmission risk and reducing disruption to children and young people's education.

Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air that contains virus particles and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Good ventilation has also been associated with a range of benefits, including improved health, better concentration, and lower rates of absence from schools and work. Measuring CO2 levels in indoor spaces is an effective way of identifying poor ventilation in multi-occupant spaces, such as classrooms.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has emphasised the importance of ventilation and provided guidance to nurseries, schools and colleges on ventilation requirements. The department has now also started to provide CO2 monitors to state-funded nurseries, schools and further education colleges, backed by £25 million in government funding. The roll out to all special schools and alternative provision is now complete. Monitors are now being delivered to mainstream settings and the programme is on track to make all deliveries by the end of the autumn term.

The department expects that, in most cases, the monitors will confirm that existing ventilation is sufficient. Where any issues are identified, in most cases we expect this to be resolved by opening windows and doors, or in some cases minor estate repairs may be needed.

The case for additional support for nurseries, schools and colleges to maintain good ventilation will be kept under review as the programme continues and schools use the monitors to further assess their ventilation needs.

Since Step 4 of the Government's roadmap, face coverings are no longer recommended as a default in any education or childcare settings. The government expects and recommends that face coverings are worn in enclosed and crowded



spaces where individuals may come into contact with people they do not normally meet. This includes public transport and dedicated transport to school or college.

The government may offer local authorities an enhanced response package to areas of particular concern to help limit increases in transmission. Directors of Public Health have discretion to re-introduce advice on face-coverings in nurseries, schools and colleges across areas that have been offered an enhanced response package. As part of their outbreak management responsibilities, Directors of Public Health may also recommend face coverings for an individual setting experiencing an outbreak.

Nurseries, schools and colleges should continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone, maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated and follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19. The department will continue to keep these measures under review, in partnership with health experts and informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[64726]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the success of the covid-19 infection control measures in place in schools in the last six months.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

In February 2021, the government set out a roadmap out of lockdown, including for easing restrictions and the control measures that would remain at each step, including in education. In order to take each step, led by data not dates, an assessment was made by the government against four tests.

In July 2021, after a pause to Step 4, it was assessed that the four tests had been met for this – with the success of the vaccination rollout allowing for the safe and gradual lifting of many remaining restrictions across settings including education, whilst continuing to manage COVID-19 through vaccination and remaining control measures proportionate to the COVID-19 outbreak. Details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/moving-to-step-4-of-the-roadmap>. This includes continued guidance for schools to ensure they keep good hygiene measures in place, keep spaces well ventilated and follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases. In addition, those 12 and over are now being offered the COVID-19 vaccine. Most recently, in September 2021, the Government's COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021 assessed preparedness for autumn and winter, including plans for control measures. Details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021>.

In making decisions on control measures in education, we have continually balanced the impact of measures on education, health and wellbeing, and the functioning of school settings, as well as the COVID-19 risks. As the balance of risks has shifted, given vaccination rollout, it has been appropriate to step down measures, as for the

rest of the economy and society – with the imperative to maximise face-to face attendance and minimise disruption to education. The department published Evidence Summaries to accompany key decision points in February and July 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-summary-covid-19-children-young-people-and-education-settings>.

The department continues to monitor the latest and emerging scientific literature and to work with the Department of Health and Social Care, Office for National Statistics and UK Health Security Agency to develop our guidance for education and childcare settings. The UK Health and Security Agency leads on assessing the overall epidemiological picture and produces weekly surveillance reports, which include data on outbreaks in education and confirmed cases in school age children. Details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2021-to-2022-season>.

The department collects and publishes attendance data for state-funded school settings. Attendance is currently higher than at the end of the summer term, when contact isolation was still in place in education settings. Details are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

#### ■ Schools: Energy Performance Certificates

**Peter Kyle:** [64681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of schools had an EPC rating of C or above in each of the last 10 years.

**Peter Kyle:** [64682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of schools have (a) external wall insulation, (b) double or triple-glazing, (c) solar panels and (d) heat pumps.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department does not hold Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), these are held by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) who run the EPC scheme. We work closely with BEIS to understand the energy performance of the school estate.

The next round of the Condition Data Collection (CDC2) programme has started and will collect further information about the sustainability performance of the school estate, including heat pumps. Further information about this scheme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/condition-data-collection-2-cdc2-programme>. The previous Condition Data Collection (CDC1) programme was undertaken between 2017-19. However, this does not hold the specific data that you have identified.

More broadly, the department is committed to investing in the school estate and has recently announced that all new Department for Education delivered projects, delivered under our new construction framework, will be net zero carbon in operation. They will also respond appropriately to climate change adaptation such as



overheating risk, biodiversity net gain and enhanced flood resilience measures, to contribute towards meeting the government's climate change targets.

## ■ Schools: Food Supply

**Peter Kyle:**

**[63785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of schools that are stockpiling food items in response to potential supply chain disruption to school meals.

**Will Quince:**

Schools are responsible for the provision of school meals and may enter individual contracts with suppliers and caterers to meet this duty.

There is no evidence to suggest widespread supply issues. We routinely consider contingency arrangements and expect schools and catering companies supplying them to do the same.

The department does not monitor individual school contracts nor stock levels, but expects schools to continue providing pupils with nutritious school meals and to meet the School Food Standards which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>.

The department's published guidance advises schools, further education colleges and local authorities on how to prepare for potential changes to food supplies so they can minimise the effect on pupils and young people in their care. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/preparing-for-food-supply-problems-from-1-january-2021>.

Schools are not encouraged to order more than they need, but do have flexibility under the School Food Standards to substitute food products if particular ingredients or meals are not readily available.

## ■ Specialist Schools: Certification

**Holly Mumby-Croft:**

**[58573]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a form of formal certification to recognise the skills gained from practical work that Business and Enterprise Colleges and other specialist schools provide.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

There are no plans for introducing any new accreditations for the practical work undertaken by Business and Enterprise Colleges. However, many schools, including University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and some mainstream schools, already specialise in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and vocational subjects, with a focus on practice and skills-based education. Schools with a strong specialism,

especially where backed with strong employer support, can provide effective pathways for the skills needed in the labour market. The Engineering UTC Northern Lincolnshire in Scunthorpe is an excellent example of how strong UTCs can equip young people with important knowledge and skills. This school is rated Good by Ofsted and the latest destinations data from the 2019/20 academic year indicates that 86% of pupils from this school moved into sustained education, employment, or an apprenticeship after Key Stage 4.

Ofsted's inspection framework recognises the unique curriculum approach of different schools, whether knowledge or skills-based, and provides a fair judgment of their effectiveness.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways: Swimming

**Layla Moran:**

[\[67248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many applications were received for bathing water status (a) for coastal areas, (b) for inland waters and (c) in total from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Between 1 November 2020 and 31 October 2021, Defra has received a total of four applications for bathing water designation: two applications at coastal areas and two applications for inland waters. All applications are currently under consideration.

### ■ Fertilisers

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[63689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking (a) to safeguard the supply of fertiliser to the UK and (b) to maintain the price of fertiliser at a level which is affordable for users.

**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 due to higher energy prices. This has also increased the cost of other alternative fertiliser types. This is an issue affecting Europe and the global market with fertiliser companies reducing production due to high input costs. However, the recent deal announced with industry and CF Fertilisers ensures continued production of fertiliser in the UK and will help alleviate the pressure on the domestic market by helping to ensure continued supply.

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. The

situation and impact on farmers in particular and industry more widely is being monitored closely. However, decisions on pricing and supply of fertilisers are a matter for the market.

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

## ■ Food: Northern Ireland

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[64737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of sales by food manufacturers in Great Britain to Northern Ireland since January 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Northern Ireland Protocol has led to considerable disruption in the movement of goods. There has been clear diversion of trade. Supply chains have been disrupted and costs increased due to new bureaucracy.

Therefore, we put forward proposals to fix the problems in our Command Paper in July. The Government is now in intensive discussions with the EU with the aim of delivering significant changes to the NI Protocol.

A recent survey (4-19 October) of the members of the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) found that the sales volumes from GB to NI had fallen by an average of 13% since the Northern Ireland Protocol came into effect on 1 January 2021. This was across the 83 businesses surveyed. It should be noted that this is a sub sample of FDF's over 300 members and not necessarily representative.

## ■ Furs: Imports

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[59915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to bring forward a green paper banning the importing and selling of animal fur in the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000, and 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Now we have left the EU, the Government is able to explore potential action in relation to animal fur.

We recently concluded a call for evidence on the fur trade in Great Britain which provided both stakeholders and the public the opportunity to provide evidence and views on this important matter, which received around 30,000 responses. A summary of responses setting out the key findings will be published in due course.

## ■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

**Ruth Jones:** [\[64731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has read the UN Environment Programme's The Emissions Gap Report 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

We welcome the UN Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report 2021. As this report makes clear, it is important that each country delivers on their 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions and net zero commitments. The UK's pledge to cut emissions by at least 68% by 2030 is one of the most ambitious in the world.

The UK has been pressing all leaders to commit to ambitious climate action ahead of COP26 to help keep 1.5°C in reach. We will continue to do this, at COP and throughout our Presidency year.

Domestically, we are taking vital steps through our recently published Net Zero Strategy to play our part. My department has a crucial role to play in helping this government achieve its net zero target. As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, we will support our agriculture and land use sectors to reduce emissions, restore huge swathes of peat, create vast woodlands, and take action to reduce harmful waste and gases. This is central to our ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Mr John Baron:** [\[67077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 10 August 2021, and letters chasing up that correspondence of 14 September 2021 and 12 October 2021, regarding his constituent, reference JB33695.

**Rebecca Pow:**

A reply to the hon. Member is being prepared and will be issued very shortly. I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member.

## ■ Tourist Attractions: Sewage

**Jim Shannon:** [\[64617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent excessive sewage in tourist areas.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In 2019 98.3% of UK Designated Bathing Sites passed the minimum standard for bathing and more than 70% of bathing waters achieved the 'excellent' rating, compared with 28% at the highest standard in the 1990s.

Water quality is a devolved matter and the following information is for England only.

I have been crystal clear that water companies must take further action to reduce sewage discharges from Storm Overflows and this is a Government priority. Our draft Strategic Policy Statement to Ofwat sets out for the first time that we expect water companies to take the steps required to "significantly reduce.... storm overflows." We have also announced that we will put that instruction on a statutory footing with a new duty on water companies to progressively reduce the impact of sewage discharges.

Furthermore, our Environment Bill also includes the following new duties directly on water companies to:

- publish statutory Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans, for the first time, setting out how they will reduce overflows, as well as detailing other improvements, and provides the power for government to direct companies if these plans are inadequate;
- monitor water quality up and downstream of areas potentially affected by discharges;
- publish data on storm overflow operation on an annual basis;
- publish near real time information -within 1 hour- on the operation of storm overflows.

We will not hesitate to use our powers to hold companies to account. Earlier this year Southern Water was handed a record-breaking £90 million fine, and Thames Water was fined £4 million and £2.3 million for separate incidents.

New amendments have been tabled that place duties on government to publish a plan by September 2022 to reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows and reduce their impact. There is also a duty to report to Parliament on progress on implementing the plan. We will also produce a report outlining further evidence regarding elimination of Storm Overflows by September 2022.

Truly reducing harm from storm overflows will require a collaborative approach between many actors. To this end, in August 2020 I established the Storm Overflows Taskforce to bring together key stakeholders from the water industry, regulators, and environmental NGOs, with a long-term goal to eliminate harm from storm overflows. The Taskforce has already taken steps to improve monitoring and transparency and has commissioned research to gather evidence on the costs, benefits and feasibility of different options.

## ■ **Turkeys: Imports**

**Ruth Jones:**

**[64736]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of barriers to the supply of turkeys for Christmas 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain which has coped well in responding to unprecedented challenges. Defra works closely with businesses and other stakeholders to monitor and assess food supply.

We have listened to concerns from the sector and we know that the run-up to Christmas is a particularly important time for farmers and food producers, who need more workers on their farms to meet seasonal demand and more HGV drivers on the roads to deliver food across the country in this period.

In response to these exceptional circumstances, Defra has announced that up to 5,500 poultry workers and 5,000 HGV drivers transporting food and fuel will be able to enter the UK on temporary visas for work in the lead up to Christmas 2021. These are temporary, emergency measures.

The Government also took decisive action to support the CO2 industry to reach a deal which will continue the supply of CO2 to UK businesses, including those in the poultry processing sector. The deal will run until January 2022 ensuring the CO2 supply over Christmas.

The actions we have taken will ensure that poultry businesses have access to the necessary workforce and materials to mitigate any potential risks to food supply in the run up to Christmas.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Afghanistan: Females

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[64618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help ensure that women in Afghanistan are able to participate in education with their rights and freedoms protected while studying at university.

**James Cleverly:**

We are committed to prioritising women and girls in the Government's response to the situation in Afghanistan. We continue to press the Taliban to ensure the full and equal access to education for all. We will continue to work with the international community to use our influence to secure women's and girls' rights to access to education and jobs and to participate in public life. 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: Politics and Government

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[66187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on the announcement of a government in Afghanistan.

**James Cleverly:**

How to approach the Taliban has been a topic of numerous discussions since the Taliban's announcement on 7 September, including two meetings of Foreign Ministers hosted by the US, the meeting of P5 Foreign Ministers which the Foreign Secretary convened on 22 September, an extraordinary meeting of G20 Leaders that the Foreign Secretary attended on 19 October, as well as bilateral meetings that the Prime Minister, the Minister of State for South Asia Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, and the Foreign Secretary have had with our international counterparts including during the Foreign Secretary's trips to the region in September and October. The UK and our international partners have agreed that the best way to pursue our objectives on counter-terrorism, humanitarian access, human rights, regional security and safe passage is to have a pragmatic dialogue with the Taliban, including through the UK Mission for Afghanistan in Doha.

**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****Douglas Chapman:**[\[64645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what counselling services have been provided for Afghan personnel and their families who (a) assisted British Forces in Afghanistan and (b) have since been repatriated to the UK.

**James Cleverly:**

There is significant work underway across the whole of Government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with us in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate into their local communities in the UK. This includes healthcare support, where the Government is providing £3 million of additional NHS funding so that Afghans arriving under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy scheme can access healthcare and register with a GP. The plans, dubbed 'Operation Warm Welcome', are being overseen by Victoria Atkins as the new Minister for Afghan Resettlement at the Home Office.

**■ Brazil: Politics and Government****Ruth Jones:**[\[65500\]](#)

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

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK values its wide-ranging relationship with Brazil, among the elements of which are our bilateral partnerships on climate, trade, security, and development. We monitor the political and economic situation closely. Among many recent issues of interest that we have followed have been the demonstrations of 7 September, and the Congressional report on the Government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also following discussions on the electoral system, and the integrity of democratic institutions. We engage with the Brazilian Government, political parties, and civil society organisations around Brazil on an ongoing basis.



The UK is clear about the importance of accountable democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the safeguarding of human rights. In the lead up to the October 2022 presidential elections, it will be important for all participants to respect core democratic principles and avoid inflammatory rhetoric.

## ■ Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

**Chris Law:**

[\[66208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the Government plans to publish a follow-up to the 2019 Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy reaffirmed our commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) provided a comprehensive account of actions being taken across the UK by government and other actors, across all 17 SDGs. No decision has been made about a follow-up to the 2019 VNR.

**Chris Law:**

[\[66209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the Government plans to establish a stakeholder engagement mechanism on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as outlined in the commitments made in the UK's 2019 Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy reaffirmed our commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) provided a comprehensive account of actions being taken across the UK by government and other actors, on each of the 17 SDGs. As a result of COVID-19, the context since the VNR was published in 2019 has changed significantly. We are discussing with Cabinet Office and other relevant government departments how to appropriately take forward action on the SDGs including commitments arising from the VNR. In addition, all government departments published Outcome Delivery Plans on 15 July 2021. These plans highlight how each department will support the delivery of the SDGs for 2021-22. FCDO continues to regularly engage with a range of stakeholders, such as the Bond SDG Group, UN Global Compact UK and Project Everyone, on matters relating to the SDGs.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Afghanistan**

**Layla Moran:**

[\[67247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2021 to Question 63862 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Afghanistan, whether the cost of the Joint Afghanistan Casework Unit will be counted as Official Development Assistance.

**James Cleverly:**

FCDO is now seen as a multi-purpose agency as per the Development Assistance Committee (OECD) rules. This allows FCDO to report administrative costs of staff working in aid related duties either in full or in part thereof. Therefore, some of the activities undertaken by the Joint Afghanistan Casework Unit could be attributed to the ODA budget.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Former Ministers**

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[63650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what procedures are in place with respect of former Ministers in her Department and the selection process for the heads of international organisations.

**Amanda Milling:**

It is a UK priority to maintain strong UK representation at the top of international organisations and this forms an important part of our multilateral engagement. The selection processes for appointing heads of international organisations differs depending on the organisation, but the UK always promotes merit based, transparent senior level appointments in the multilateral system. We proactively target and support well qualified UK and non-UK candidates at all levels and run high level campaigns to support UK Nationals for priority roles.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Jaguar Land Rover**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[67105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October to Question 61126 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Jaguar Land Rover, how many of the (a) 23 petrol hybrid, (b) 9 battery electric vehicles and (c) 21 other vehicles procured by FCDO Services from Jaguar Land Rover since 1 January 2020 were purchased for use (i) in the UK and (ii) overseas.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is transitioning its overseas vehicle fleet to low emission vehicles, but we have to work with the infrastructure of the countries we operate in. Of the 23 petrol, 9 battery electric and 21 other vehicles procured by FCDO Services from Jaguar Land Rover since 1 January 2020 all 53 have been purchased for overseas use.

**Haiti: Fuels**

**Ruth Jones:** [\[65501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the availability of fuel in Haiti.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is deeply concerned at the deteriorating security situation in Haiti and the impact this is having on the Haitian people. We are closely following developments, including on fuel availability. The UK supports the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN Special Political Mission, BINUH, in their ongoing diplomatic engagement with the Haitian authorities. We continue to use our platform both in country and at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to call for credible and transparent elections as soon as technically feasible, to ensure Haiti is governed by strong democratic institutions chosen by the Haitian people.

**Lebanon: Politics and Government**

**Feryal Clark:** [\[64751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for his policies of the political and humanitarian situation in Lebanon.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK Government closely follows the security situation in Beirut and across Lebanon, and maintains a regular dialogue with international counterparts on this. Following the recent clashes in Beirut on 14 October, I issued a public message calling for calm. The UK Government and likeminded partners also reiterated this message at the most recent UN Security Council closed consultations on UNSCR 1559 in Lebanon on 20 October.

**Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo**

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[67122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Cuban counterparts on the detention of Pastor Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are clear that all Cubans should have the right to protest peacefully, and that detention must not be used as a tool to restrict freedom of expression, assembly, and religion. The UK was one of the first countries to call for the Cuban people to be allowed to express their views freely and peacefully following the Cuban Government's response to demonstrations on 11 July.

We are concerned to hear reports that Pastor Rosales Fajardo has been maltreated while detained, and that the authorities may seek a 10-year prison sentence. We

have raised our concerns over ongoing detentions directly with the Cuban Government, both in London and Havana.

■ **Pakistan: British Nationals Abroad**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[64615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support the UK nationals in Pakistan who have fled Afghanistan.

**James Cleverly:**

British consular services in Pakistan are supporting British nationals who have left Afghanistan and who have expressed their wish to travel to the UK. British nationals who make their way from Afghanistan to third countries, including Pakistan, may access full consular services at our diplomatic missions. British nationals should continue to read Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Travel Advice to keep up to date with developments.

■ **Pakistan: Coronavirus**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[64612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to support Pakistan with their covid-19 vaccine rollout.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is supporting the equitable rollout of vaccines in Pakistan through COVAX (COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access), an international alliance co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The UK has contributed £548 million to COVAX's Advance Market Commitment, which is supplying vaccines for up to 92 developing countries, including Pakistan. The Prime Minister has confirmed that the UK will share the majority of any future UK domestic surplus COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX. In addition, UK-funded programmes are providing technical assistance in support of vaccination roll out at provincial level in Pakistan, enabling mass communication of COVID-19 behaviour change messages, and supporting work to understand the characteristics of beneficiaries and key challenges around vaccine administration.

■ **Sustainable Development: Developing Countries**

**Chris Law:**

[\[66207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government has made on achieving the commitments set out in the UK's Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, published in 2019.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy reaffirmed our commitment to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UK's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) provided a comprehensive account of actions being taken across the UK by government and other actors, on each of the 17 SDGs. As a result of COVID-19, the context since the VNR was published in 2019 has changed significantly. We are discussing with Cabinet Office and other relevant government departments how to appropriately take forward action on the SDGs, including commitments arising from the VNR. In addition, all government departments published Outcome Delivery Plans on 15 July 2021. These plans highlight how each department will support the delivery of the SDGs for 2021-22.

## ■ UK Relations with EU: National Security

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[64750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her European counterparts on strengthening co-operation on security.

**James Cleverly:**

Since her appointment on 15 September, the Foreign Secretary has engaged closely with European counterparts on defence and security matters, through bilateral and multilateral channels. Of particular note is the roundtable that she hosted with her counterparts from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, at which the attendees discussed the bilateral and multilateral partnerships between our countries, as well as Russia, China and the global security climate. Additionally, she recently met with her Greek counterpart to sign the UK-Greece Strategic Bilateral Framework, which builds on strong existing security and defence cooperation. The Foreign Secretary is preparing for her first NATO Ministerial meeting on 30 November, where she will meet with Allied counterparts from Europe.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

## ■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Rehabilitation

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[64662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he has made available for drug and alcohol services in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

Funding for drug and alcohol services is within the overall budget allocated to the Department over the next three years. We are undertaking a business planning and prioritisation exercise to determine the specific projects and programmes which will be taken forward before this funding is made available in April 2022.

## ■ Avelumab

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[67283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the reasons for NICE's refusal to make Avelumb available on the NHS in England.

**Edward Argar:**

We have made no such assessment. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body responsible for developing recommendations in line with its published methods and processes.

NICE has published guidance recommending avelumab for use in a number of cancers and it is now available to patients.

NICE is currently developing guidance on the use of avelumab for use in the treatment of urothelial cancer.

## ■ Blood Tests

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[64639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure blood tests are administrated on time by NHS England.

**Edward Argar:**

To increase the volume of diagnostic activity such as blood tests and reduce patient waiting times, we have committed £2.3 billion for diagnostics over the next three years. This will fund the establishment of at least 100 community diagnostic centres by 2024-25, helping clear the backlog of patients waiting for clinical tests. This is in addition to the £325 million allocated this year for improving National Health Service diagnostics.

## ■ Cancer: Drugs

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[57364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many treatments have been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) under Project Orbis; and how many of those treatments have met the 150 day deadline that the MHRA sets out for its regular accelerated approval process.

**Edward Argar:**

Since 21 January 2021, five treatments have been approved, comprised of three new marketing authorisations and two variations of currently licensed products. Variations are approved in a shorter time frame of 90 days. Two of the three new marketing authorisations met the 150 day target, the third was approved in 156 days.

## ■ Chemicals: Storage

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[67100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many units of (a) undenatured ethyl alcohol, (b) hydrogen peroxide, (c) aluminium salts, (d) sorbitol, (e) formaldehyde, (f) formic acid, (g) acetic acid and (h) citric acid monohydrate were held in stockpiles maintained or overseen by (i) his Department and (ii) NHS England on (A) 31 October 2019, (B) 31 October 2020 and (C) 29 October 2021.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[67101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what stocks of (a) undenatured ethyl alcohol, (b) hydrogen peroxide, (c) aluminium salts, (d) sorbitol, (e) formaldehyde, (f) formic acid, (g) acetic acid and (h) citric acid monohydrate he estimates to have been held by UK pharmaceutical companies responsible for vaccine production on (i) 31 October 2019, (ii) 31 October 2020 and (iii) 29 October 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement have not maintained or overseen stockpiles of these products.

We have made no estimate of the levels of stock held by United Kingdom pharmaceutical companies.

## ■ Dental Services

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[56166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 188120 on dental services, what the timeframe is for bringing forward proposals on addressing the key challenges facing the delivery of National Health Service dentistry.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the sector to explore these challenges and how they could be addressed. NHS England and NHS Improvement have established advisory and technical working groups, with membership from the dental profession. These groups are exploring new contractual arrangements to bring forward proposals for change. Any proposed contractual changes will be negotiated with the British Dental Association and may involve legislative changes. It is therefore not possible to set out when these changes could be implemented.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Local Government Finance

**Mr Clive Betts:** [\[56775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many funds are allocated to local authorities by his Department through a process of competitive bidding; and if he will publish the names of those funds.



**Edward Argar:**

The five grant funded schemes allocated in 2021-22 which involved a competitive bidding process are as follows:

- Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant Scheme;
- Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents;
- Child and Family Weight Management Services;
- Shared Outcomes Fund – Rough Sleepers; and
- Self-Isolation Pilots.

**■ Diagnosis****Jonathan Ashworth:****[64621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 49 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, if he will publish the planned locations of the 100 community diagnostic hubs.

**Edward Argar:**

The National Health Service is planning to open 44 community diagnostic centres across England this year and we have announced funding for a further 56 centres through the Spending Review. The sites of the initial 40 centres are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/40-community-diagnostic-centres-launching-across-england>

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with systems to identify suitable locations for the community diagnostic centres referenced in the Spending Review. The sites will be announced in due course.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Females****Jonathan Ashworth:****[64620]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure organisations that work to end domestic abuse and support victims are consulted on the upcoming Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The call for evidence, which will inform the priorities, content and actions of the Women's Health Strategy for England ran for 14 weeks. Organisations and individuals were invited to contribute, including organisations supporting the victims of domestic abuse. We are currently analysing the responses to the call for evidence and will publish the Strategy in due course.

## ■ General Practitioners

**Sarah Olney:** [\[67228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help GP surgeries meet demand for appointments.

**Maria Caulfield:**

We are increasing capacity in general practice by creating an extra 50 million appointments a year by increasing and diversifying the workforce. This will mean improved access for patients and support for staff to provide a wider range of care options outside of hospital.

To help general practitioner (GP) surgeries meet demand for appointments, we have announced a £250 million Winter Access Fund. This will assist patients with urgent care needs to see a member of the practice team when required, with a focus on increasing capacity for urgent same day care and taking account of patient preferences.

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

## ■ General Practitioners: Recruitment

**Tim Loughton:** [\[67044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to deliver 6,000 more GPs by 2025.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England are working with the profession to increase the general practitioner (GP) workforce in England. This includes measures on recruitment, to address the reasons why doctors leave the profession and encourage them to return to practice.

The updated GP Contract Framework for 2020/21 announced a number of new retention schemes alongside continued support for existing schemes. These schemes include the GP Retention Scheme, the International Induction Programme, the Return to Practice Programme, the Fellowship Programme, the New to Partnership Payment and Supporting Mentors Scheme. Last year, 3,793 doctors started GP training and we are committed to increasing the number of training places available to 4,000 a year.

## ■ Global Health Insurance Card: Welsh Language

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[67219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Global Health Insurance Card is available in English and Welsh.

**Edward Argar:**

The Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) is available in English and Welsh. Cardholders applying in Wales automatically receive the Welsh version of the GHIC card and accompanying letter which has a separate English translation.

**Hormone Replacement Therapy: Shortages****Claire Hanna:**[\[65535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to tackle supply issues surrounding HRT products.

**Claire Hanna:**[\[65536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) range and (b) variety of HRT products available to patients through the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 November 2021]:* The Department is aware of supply issues that are affecting a very limited number of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) products. We have been working closely with all suppliers to help to maintain overall supply to patients in the United Kingdom. We have shared regular updates about these issues and management advice with the National Health Service and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

A range of HRT preparations remain available to patients through the NHS. This includes a variety of both oestrogen-only HRT preparations in oral tablets, transdermal patches and gels and Estradiol/progesterone combination products marketed as tablets and transdermal patches.

**Hospitals: Parking****Dan Jarvis:**[\[67159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce car parking fees to visitors who need to attend hospital regularly.

**Edward Argar:**

While the National Health Service does not provide free hospital car parking to frequent visitors, outpatients who attend hospital at least three times within a month for an overall period of at least three months are eligible for free hospital parking. A month is defined as a period of 30 days.

**Members: Correspondence****Sir Mike Penning:**[\[46954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to correspondence from the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead of 19 February 2021, case no MP68189, on Emergency Carers Support Fund.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 15 September 2021]:* We replied to the Rt hon. Member on 14 October.

**Hilary Benn:**[\[49951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to provide a response to the correspondence from the Right hon. Member for Leeds Central of 10 May 2021 regarding his constituent Mr Q., reference HB6862.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 September 2021]:* We replied to the Rt hon. Member on 2 November 2021.

**Rosie Cooper:**[\[50643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 28 May 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on Government's obesity strategy, reference ZA56588.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:* We replied to the hon. Member on 12 October 2021.

**Maria Eagle:**[\[61117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the letter on behalf of a constituent from the hon. Member for Garston and Halewood of August 10 2021 on student nurse debt and the abolition of nurses and allied trades bursaries.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* We responded to the hon. Member's letter on 1 November 2021.

**■ Mental Health Services: Finance****Rachael Maskell:**[\[63770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of funding for Integrated Care Systems will be spent on mental health services.

**Edward Argar:**

The Health and Care Bill will establish statutory integrated care boards (ICBs) which will take on some of NHS England's commissioning functions and those of clinical commissioning groups.

It will be for local ICBs to determine what proportion of their funding is spent on mental health services.

## ■ Mental Health: Research

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[57046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the Government spent on mental health research in (a) 2015-16, (b) 2016-17, (c) 2017-18, (d) 2018-19, (e) 2019-20 and (f) 2020-21.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the largest funder of mental health research in the United Kingdom. The following table shows the NIHR's spending on mental health research from 2015/16 to 2019/20. Information on spending in 2020/21 is not yet available.

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2015/16	£73,055,090
2016/17	£76,627,407
2017/18	£80,318,055
2018/19	£93,377,813
2019/20	£93,411,275

## ■ NHS: Staff

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[67272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of funding announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 will be allocated to (a) training and recruiting diagnostic staff and (b) tackling shortages in the cancer workforce.

**Edward Argar:**

Following the outcome of the Spending Review 2021, plans for individual budgets for 2022/23 to 2024/25, including for training and recruiting diagnostic staff and the wider cancer workforce, will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

## ■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[67230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) review the schedule of prescription exemptions and (b) make it his policy that prescriptions for people with chronic mental health conditions are free of charge.

**Edward Argar:**

We currently have no plans to review or extend the prescription charge medical exemptions list to include chronic mental health conditions. Approximately 89% of

prescriptions are already dispensed free of charge and arrangements are in place to help those most in need. To support those who do not qualify for an exemption, the cost of prescriptions can be spread by purchasing a prescription pre-payment certificate. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[67236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a medical exemption from prescription charges for people who have sickle cell anaemia.

**Edward Argar:**

We currently have no plans to review or extend the prescription charge medical exemptions list to include sickle cell anaemia. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are already dispensed free of charge and arrangements are in place to help those most in need. To support those who do not qualify for an exemption, the cost of prescriptions can be spread by purchasing a prescription pre-payment certificate. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

#### ■ Rare Diseases: Health Services

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[64610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the NHS is taking to implement and embed principles of shared decision making with clinicians when considering patient treatment options for (a) hereditary angioedema and (b) other rare diseases.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England has developed a shared decision-making summary guide and implementation checklist, applicable to all rare diseases. For hereditary angioedema (HAE) specifically, local providers of services have arrangements in place to implement these principles to support individualised decision-making. The forthcoming HAE procurement framework currently in development will support clinicians and patients in shared decision-making on treatment options.

#### ■ Surgery

**Peter Dowd:**

[\[66203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when data collection for the Cancelled Elective Operations dataset will be resumed for inclusion in planned publication of the quarter 3 2021-22 data set in 2022.

**Peter Dowd:**

[\[66204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to include data on operations cancelled or postponed for non-clinical reasons by NHS

Trusts according to specialty when the publication of the Cancelled Elective Operations dataset is resumed.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 November 2021]:* The collection will resume for Quarter 3 2021/22, to be published in February 2022.

The decision on data on cancelled or postponed operations is determined based on a balanced assessment, to collect timely and clinically valuable data. There are currently no official plans to introduce new data. When considering future changes to data published, NHS England and NHS Improvement will take account of the views of the clinicians, patients and stakeholder organisations.

■ **Surgical Mesh Implants**

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[56338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which specialist surgical mesh removal centres are (a) offering rectopexy mesh removal and (b) expected to be offering rectopexy mesh removal within the next 12 months.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The specialist mesh services currently in operation do not offer rectopexy mesh removal. NHS England's specialised commissioning team is currently preparing the commissioning of rectopexy services within the specialist mesh services, with the aim of achieving this later this financial year. The information requested on which of the specialist mesh services will be offering rectopexy mesh removal within the next 12 months is not yet available.

■ **Visual Impairment: Health Services**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[67069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which Minister is responsible for improving the (a) prevention and (b) treatment of sight loss conditions.

**Maria Caulfield:**

I am the Minister with responsibility for primary eye care services, including the National Health Service sight testing service, which can detect conditions that can lead to sight loss.

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Vaccines and Public Health (Maggie Throup MP) is responsible for prevention which includes the diabetic retinopathy screening programme and tackling known causes of sight loss such as smoking and obesity.

In addition, my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health (Edward Argar MP) is responsible for hospital services, including hospital eye care services which provides treatment for sight loss conditions.



**■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control****Adam Afriye:** [\[64562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy for the UK delegation to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Ninth Conference of the Parties to support any requests from countries on the formation of an intersessional Working Group to hear evidence on the use of vaping devices as harm reduction tools.

**Adam Afriye:** [\[64563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the UK delegation's position statement at the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Ninth Conference of the Parties is planned to support vaping devices as harm reduction tools.

**Adam Afriye:** [\[64568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's position as a signatory to Article 1(d) of the World Health Organisations Framework Convention Tobacco Control, if she will reaffirm her Department's commitment to harm reduction strategies to reduce smoking.

**Maggie Throup:**

We are not aware of any proposals from other countries on the formation of an intersessional Working Group at the Ninth Conference of the Parties. Should any proposals be made, we will fully consider the details before making a decision as to whether to support them.

In support of our ambition for England to be smoke-free by 2030, we continue to take a pragmatic and evidence-based approach to e-cigarettes, promoting the important role they play in smoking cessation whilst preventing non-smokers and young people from using them. On other harm reduction products, we are clear that any products which contain tobacco are harmful to health.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Asylum: Death****Stuart C McDonald:** [\[67177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people (a) whose registered address was in asylum accommodation and (b) on subsistence-only asylum support have died since 1 April 2016; and how many serious incident reports on deaths of asylum seekers her Department has received from asylum accommodation contactors since 1 April 2016.

**Tom Pursglove:**

Deaths in asylum support and accommodation do occur, and in general, mortality rates do not exceed that of the general UK population. This includes deaths from natural causes or long-term terminal illnesses.

The Home Office, through undertaking its statutory duties towards asylum seekers and working with other agencies and organisations, takes a great many steps to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of those whom we support. We continue to work closely with a range of organisations to provide support to those that need it and, where necessary, will fully cooperate in any investigation into the cause of an individual's death.

The specific information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## ■ **Contact Tracing: Travel Requirements**

**Alex Sobel:**

**[60504]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment criteria were used for the procurement of the UK's Passenger Locator Form contract.

**Kevin Foster:**

When the requirements for a Passenger Locator Form were established, it was identified it could be delivered within the existing contracts and infrastructure of the Home Office's online immigration application service, Access UK.

As such, the form was established reusing the architecture and components already available, allowing for it to be delivered at pace to help combat the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ■ **Drugs: Police Cautions**

**Ronnie Cowan:**

**[64653]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many cautions have been issued for (a) all drug possession offences and (b) possession of cannabis under sections 5(1) and (2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in each year since 2011.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and published data on the number of crimes and investigative outcomes recorded by the Police on a quarterly basis in England and Wales.

Information on the number of caution outcomes recorded for each offence including possession of cannabis, can be found here: [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/data-and-statistics/police-recorded-crime-and-outcomes-open-data-tables)

For information about the crimes recorded by the police in Scotland, please refer to the Recorded Crime in Scotland publication, which can be found here:

[Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2020-2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-in-scotland-2020-2021/pages/2.aspx)

[Police Recorded Crime Statistics \(psni.police.uk\)](https://psni.police.uk/)

## ■ Electric Scooters

**Rachael Maskell:** [67323]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of number of (a) fines issued and (b) cases brought to court involved offences by persons while using e-scooter in (i) 2020-21 and (ii) 2021-22 to date.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes data on Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and other outcomes for motoring offences (including court action) on an annual basis as part of the 'Police Powers and Procedures' statistical publication. The most recent data, for the years 2011-2019, is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2020>

However, data is not collected on the type of vehicle (including e-scooters) for which the FPN is issued.

Information on cases brought to court are a matter for the MoJ.

## ■ Emergency Services Network: Wales

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [67220]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to accelerate the activation of Emergency Area Service masts in Wales.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Activation of all EAS sites is dependent on securing a transmission solution with a supplier. This is currently in progress and we expect to make this award towards the end of this year. Thereafter, we anticipate that all EAS sites will commence in April 2022 with all sites activated by the end of 2024. In Wales there are 86 EAS sites of which 35 are passive build complete and awaiting transmission and activation. These 35 sites will be part of the priority sites once the transmission contract has been secured. We need to follow government procurement processes fully in this award and are unable to accelerate this aspect of the process.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Daisy Cooper:** [59063]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the impact on the (a) ability of and (b) cost for EU citizens of visiting family in the UK of the withdrawal of EU identity cards for entering that country.

**Daisy Cooper:** [59064]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens visited the UK using EU identity cards for entering the UK in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Foster:**

The UK has left the EU, ended free movement and is aligning the entry of EU and non-EU citizens. Citizens from outside the EU (and other EEA countries and Switzerland) cannot use national identity cards for travel to the UK and EEA national identity cards are, as a rule, less secure than national passports, hence they dominated the figures for document abuse detected at the border. Their use presented a risk to border security which we are no longer obliged to accept.

All visitors from outside the EU are expected to hold a passport (and visa where necessary) and those visiting from EU countries are now expected to do the same.

We provided almost a year's notice for this change to allow people to plan ahead and obtain a passport, if they need to, before they travel.

Using a passport also means EU nationals making a short visit can also use e-gates where available for a quicker and easier arrival experience.

In implementing this policy, a full impact assessment was carried out which can be found at the following link:

[Impact Assessment \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The cost of applying for and obtaining a passport in EU, EEA countries and Switzerland varies between countries and is a matter for those countries to decide.

**■ National Crime Agency: Staff****Kevin Hollinrake:****[62780]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many accredited financial investigators the National Crime Agency has employed in each of the last five years.

**Damian Hinds:**

The National Crime Agency (NCA) currently has 174\* accredited financial investigators (FIs). Figures for previous years are not held. The number of FIs does not directly equate to the volume of financial investigative work undertaken by the NCA, as criminal investigators progress money laundering cases, with the support of the FI network where required.

\*These figures may include FIs who are on a career break, have recently left the agency, or have moved into a non-FI role (either temporarily or permanently).

**■ Nationality and Borders Bill****Stuart C McDonald:****[67180]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish an economic impact assessment of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

**Tom Pursglove:**

An economic impact assessment of the Nationality and Borders Bill will be published in due course, to complement the Equality Impact Assessment, which was published on 16 September.

The Equality Impact Assessment can be found on the GOV.UK website;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-equality-impact-assessment>.

## ■ Offences Against Children: Caldey Island

**Ben Lake:**

[66257]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to initiate a public inquiry to investigate safeguarding failures in the alleged historic child sex abuse on Caldey Island.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government recognises the pain and lasting trauma endured by victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, and we understand their need for answers as well as reassurance that the systems that let them down so badly will not do so again.

This Government continues to be clear that it is for the local authorities in individual areas, which are responsible for delivering services, to commission local inquiries. Pembrokeshire local authority must ensure that all lessons have been learnt and that local partners are doing everything possible to protect children from harm.

At a national level, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse is focused on uncovering institutional failings, including through their recent report into child protection in religious organisations. A final report is expected in 2022, and we will continue to carefully consider all of the Inquiry's recommendations to ensure real and permanent change is delivered in how children are safeguarded.

The Home Office is also helping local regions to improve their response to child sexual abuse. We are funding the Prevention Programme, delivered by The Children's Society, which delivers tailored interventions to improve collaboration and help identify specific regional threats. We support the College of Policing in providing specialist training for senior officers, to develop high standards of leadership in safeguarding, as well as the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme which identifies and shares best practice across forces in England and Wales.

## ■ Police Custody: Legal Opinion

**Alex Cunningham:**

[67146]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to review version four of the Joint Interim Interview Protocol which applies to detainees in police custody.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Joint Interim Interview Protocol was developed by the CPS, NPCC, Law Society, Criminal Law Solicitor's Association and the London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association as a temporary requirement at the start of the pandemic to ensure the functioning of the criminal justice system was maintained. An exit strategy from the protocol is ongoing and will continue to be reviewed by its signatories. It is for the

signatories to this operational protocol – the NPCC, CPS and solicitors' organisations – to determine how this should progress.

Since the implementation of version 4 of the protocol on 4 October, 'in person' attendance for legal advice has been the default position, subject to some exemptions including inadequate police infection control measures, detainee or solicitor being COVID positive and other exceptional health and safety reasons. It is not believed to be practicable to remove the protocol in its entirety whilst there remains the possibility that detainees and/or solicitors may be COVID-positive.

The Home Office has been chairing a weekly operational meeting with custody partners (Independent Custody Visiting Association, National Appropriate Adult Network, NPCC, Police Federation, Law Society and others) since March 2020. This has allowed for effective communication, feedback and learning to be embedded and the operational impact of the interview protocol to be assessed on a continuing basis.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Stella Creasy:**

**[57015]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is available to British citizens and residents who were evacuated from Afghanistan and returned to their own homes, which are now overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable due to additional family members and dependents who were evacuated with them.

**Victoria Atkins:**

A significant cross Government effort is underway to ensure the thousands of Afghans and British nationals 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 are working at pace to source appropriate accommodation as quickly as possible for those evacuated from Afghanistan. In the interim we have ensured that support is provided to all evacuees, including British nationals, temporarily accommodated in bridging hotels.

British Citizens are provided with bridging accommodation for as long as is needed. We encourage any British Citizens who have left bridging accommodation to return so that support can be provided to them.

In bridging accommodation, we are providing all new arrivals from Afghanistan, including British Citizens with cash cards to give them subsistence support whilst their Universal Credit claim is processed.

In the social rented sector, Local Authorities (LAs) are advised to allocate properties in line with current statutory bedroom standards to avoid overcrowding. By law, LAs must ensure that certain groups receive 'reasonable preference' (priority) when allocating social housing, including people who are homeless, in overcrowded housing or who need to move for medical and welfare reasons. They can also give

'additional preference' (high priority)' to people in urgent housing need, including people occupying overcrowded housing which poses a serious health hazard.

**Layla Moran:** [59945]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of Afghans evacuated under Operation Pitting who remain in (a) temporary accommodation and (b) hotels.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We can confirm that on 19 October, there were more than 11,000 individuals accommodated in bridging hotels across the UK who had been evacuated as part of Operation Pitting.

The information provided is from provisional locally held data, subject to change and is not assured to the standard of official statistics.

It should be noted that individuals evacuated under Operation Pitting which concluded overnight on 28/29 August, included families relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), British Nationals and their families, and Third Country Nationals.

**Layla Moran:** [63860]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were specifically called forward by the UK Government to Kabul airport for evacuation by the UK military and will therefore be guaranteed a place under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Between 15 and 29 August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan.

Some of the at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme will be the first to be resettled under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). People who were notified by the UK Government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK. Efforts are being made to facilitate their travel to the UK.

The scheme has yet to open. 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)

**Rachael Maskell:** [67194]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 62775 on Refugees: Afghanistan, what estimate she has made of the date on which she will know how many Afghan refugees under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme (a) have been resettled into housing and (b) remain in bridging hotels; and for what reason that data not readily available as of 28 October 2021.



**Victoria Atkins:**

We are working at pace with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation for Afghan families who were evacuated to the UK. Data on relocation will be published as part of our quarterly release which can be found at this link: [Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets).

I can confirm that there are around 11,000 individuals who were evacuated as part of Operation Pitting, and we are currently working to house people in permanent accommodation. The number housed is incumbent on receipt of offers of support from Local Authorities so I would encourage all Honourable Members to talk to their councils about what more they can do.

**Bambos Charalambous:****[67232]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) hotels and hostels are placed in each local authority and (b) asylum seekers are currently living in hotels and hostels in each local authority.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at [Asylum and resettlement datasets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets).

Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 22 August 2021. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in November 2021

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in specific accommodation. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Dairy Products: Exports****Mr Richard Holden:****[67291]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to increase exports of cheese and dairy products.

**Mike Freer:**

Our Free Trade Agreements are unlocking new opportunities for our world class cheese and dairy exporters. Our “Open Doors” agriculture, food and drink export campaign offers a wide range of support for dairy businesses 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.

## ■ Iron and Steel: USA

**Bill Esterson:**

[67137]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the US-EU agreement on steel and aluminium announced on 30 October 2021, what (a) assessment she has made of the implications of that agreement for British steel producers and (b) steps she is taking to ensure UK manufacturers have the same access to the US market as their European competitors.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The US-EU deal on the application of Section 232 tariffs comes into effect from 1 January. Following their announcement, the US issued a statement reflecting our ongoing discussions with each other on this issue and committing to resume talks with the UK. In preparation, we continue to work closely with the steel and aluminium industries to understand the implications of the US-EU deal. Any deal that the UK secures with the US must work for the steel and aluminium sectors.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Research

**Emily Thornberry:**

[67108]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to her Department's letter of appointment to LSE Enterprise, dated 1 October 2021, regarding research on the theme of Trade and Investment Measurement, what recent external research she has commissioned covering the theme of open markets and global prosperity.

**Mike Freer:**

The Department for International Trade commissioned a contract with LSE Enterprise on Trade and Investment Measurement on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The contract details are publicly available here <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>. No projects have been commissioned through this contract to date.

## ■ Trade Agreements: South America

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[67068]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications of the killing of 43 people by police in Colombia during protests in April and May 2021 for the UK-Andean trade agreement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

We have raised our concerns with all levels of government in Colombia regarding human rights violations. We welcome the Colombian government's commitment to transparent investigations into all allegations of excessive use of force, and to take appropriate action against those responsible.

**JUSTICE****■ Courts and Tribunals: Finance****Alex Cunningham:**[\[67142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to paragraph 4.29 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, published on 27 October 2021, how much and what proportion of the additional £324 million to tackle backlogs and improve timeliness will be allocated to (a) civil courts, (b) family courts and (c) tribunals.

**James Cartlidge:**

Through the Spending Review we are investing an additional £324 million to increase capacity in the civil, family and tribunal jurisdictions so that we continue tackling backlogs and improve timeliness.

The Spending Review settlement for the Civil, Family and Tribunal justice systems will be split across these jurisdictions to optimise performance.

This will be decided through the department's internal governance process (of allocations and the Concordat process). This is standard practice post SR-settlement.

Therefore, the impact on outstanding caseloads and timeliness will depend on the outcome of these processes.

**■ Crimes against the Person: Members****Sir Charles Walker:**[\[67094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answers of 27 October 2021 to Questions 58755 and 58756, on Crimes against the Person: Members, for what reason his Department does not specifically record and track those convictions related to attacks and threats made against Members of Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

**James Cartlidge:**

Centrally held courts and prisons data is recorded under a series of offence definitions, which align with legislation, and only includes characteristics related to the victim where it is central to the statutory offence (e.g. age of victim in some sexual offences). We do not otherwise collect details about the victim, such as their occupation or place of employment.

**■ Drugs: Crime****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[64654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convictions there have been for (a) all drug possession offences and (b) possession of cannabis under sections 5(1) and (2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in each year since 2011.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Ministry of Justice has published information on convictions for all drug possession offences and possession of cannabis offences in England and Wales, up

to December 2020, available in the 'Outcomes by Offence' data tool, which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/987715/outcomes-by-offence-2020.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987715/outcomes-by-offence-2020.xlsx)

For convictions for possession of any drug under sections 5(1) and (2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, follow the steps below.

- Select the following in the Offence filter:
- '92D.01 Possession of a controlled drug – Class A',
- '92D.02 Possession of a controlled drug – Class B (excluding cannabis)',
- '92D.03 Possession of a controlled drug – Class C (excluding cannabis)',
- '92D.04 Possession of a controlled drug – unknown class',
- '92E.01 Possession of a controlled drug – Class B (cannabis)' and
- '92E.02 Possession of a controlled drug – Class C (cannabis)'
- The number of convictions will be found on Row 24.

For convictions for possession of cannabis under sections 5(1) and (2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, follow the steps below.

- Select the following in the Offence filter:
- '92E.01 Possession of a controlled drug – Class B (cannabis)' and
- '92E.02 Possession of a controlled drug – Class C (cannabis)'
- The number of convictions will be found on Row 24.

## ■ Family Courts: Greater London

**Stephen Timms:** [67050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to reduce the delays in hearing cases at Westferry Family Court.

**Stephen Timms:** [67051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the impact on (a) children and (b) families of the seven month delay in hearing cases at Westferry Family Court.

**James Cartlidge:**

The administration and senior judiciary are working closely together to increase the sitting capacity across the East London Cluster which comprises of East London Family Court, Croydon County and Bromley County Court and to re-balance the volumes of work across the Region.

In recognition of the pressures on family work across the East London Estate, a Nightingale Court was created at Petty France with four additional courts. Additional courts are also being utilised in Stratford Magistrates and the Royal Courts of Justice.

The increased use of digital hearings in family have allowed the court to utilise more part-time judiciary and increase the number of hearings heard on a remote basis, and the introduction of PD36Q\* is enabling the court to progress private law cases through the system more quickly.

\*PD36Q New Pilot Practice Direction 36Q came into force from 23 April 2020. Pilot PD36Q modifies PD12B (Child Arrangements Programme) to provide temporary local flexibility over procedures for progressing applications for Child Arrangements Orders.

## ■ **Marriage: Humanism**

**Crispin Blunt:**

[\[67042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of legally recognising humanist marriages.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Law Commission will present options for how the law should be reformed in relation to who can solemnize a marriage, including how marriage by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme. The Government will consider the Commission's recommendations very carefully.

## ■ **Ministry of Justice: Written Questions**

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[66164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to answer Questions 61068 to 61087 tabled on 21 October 2021.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Responses for 61068 to 61087 were tabled on 22 October 2021 and were due for answer on 1 November 2021. Responses to these PQs were provided on 1 November.

## ■ **Offences against Children**

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[67321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the court backlog is for child sexual abuse cases.

**Tom Pursglove:**

At the end of June 2021 (latest available data) there were 4,614 outstanding child sexual abuse cases in the Crown Court and 572 in the Magistrates' Court in England and Wales.

## ■ Prison and Probation Service: Prison Officers

**Grahame Morris:**

**[64585]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what procedures and processes are in place for prison officers who wish to challenge management decisions in HM Prison and Probation Service.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The HM Prisons and Probation Service has many staff policies in place which contain an appeal process. These appeal processes offer staff the opportunity to challenge management decisions. Grievances can also be raised about management actions or decisions and staff are encouraged to raise routine queries and issues informally with a manager before initiating formal procedures.

## ■ Prison Officers

**Grahame Morris:**

**[64576]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to improve the (a) recruitment, (b) morale and (c) retention of prison officers.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We are continuing to recruit prison officers, and our recent campaigns have delivered at unprecedented levels. We continue to ensure advertised roles appeal to candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds with the relevant skills. We have introduced a new assessment process, making full use of digital technology, based on current best practice which includes tests for strengths, behaviours and resilience and have improved our access to information about the role and expectations of applicants. Full details of the recruitment process can be found via the careers website ([Prison officer application tips | HM Prison & Probation Service \(prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk\)](https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk)).

Ensuring prison officers stay and progress their careers is a priority. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is working hard to retain and to develop clear career paths for operational staff. We have recently introduced a new direct progression route from Operational Support Grade (OSG) to prison officer and are continuing to invest in our people through the introduction of the Custody and Detention apprenticeship, which will help prison officers develop the confidence and competence to undertake their role, while growing talent and a motivated, skilled, and qualified workforce. All prison officer apprentices are supported by an apprenticeship coach who will oversee and support every learner.

The Civil Service People Survey contains personal wellbeing questions which allows us to compare wellbeing levels within the Civil Service and other sectors. We have also created a retention framework which is linked to wider activities around employee experience, employee lifecycle and staff engagement at work. In parallel, we are looking at leaver trend data and using exit interview outcomes to establish the drivers of attrition in HMPPS. This work consists of reviewing existing policy, process

and benefit arrangements for staff and establishing how best to optimise them to retain a leading presence in the labour market.

## ■ **Prison Officers: Crimes against the Person**

**Grahame Morris:**

**[64580]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of assaults against prison officers.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Violence against our hard-working prison officers is unacceptable and will never be tolerated.

We work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to bring the perpetrators to justice. We are committed to making prisons a safe place to work and providing prison officers with the right support, training and tools such as PAVA pepper spray and body-worn cameras to empower them to do their jobs safely.

We are also spending £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars.

## ■ **Prison Officers: Health**

**Grahame Morris:**

**[64578]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the reasonableness of expecting prison officers aged 60 and above to pass the annual fitness test.

**Grahame Morris:**

**[64579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether any adaptations are made to the annual fitness test to take account of (a) age, (b) injury and (c) menopausal status of prison officers.

**Victoria Atkins:**

There are many factors which determine a person's ability to pass a fitness test which are often not determined by age alone. Prison officers need to be capable of performing specific tasks to a certain standard to ensure their safety and the safety of everyone else, including prisoners and work colleagues.

All prison officers must pass an annual fitness test in order to remain in a prison officer role. Staff who do not meet the annual fitness test standard will be provided with advice and support by a fitness assessor on achieving and maintaining the required fitness level. Following an occupational health (OH) referral, management can discuss and consider options for redeployment to roles that do not require the prison officer fitness level.

The annual fitness test is in place to help maintain the safety and security of our prisons by ensuring

prison officers can discharge the full range of their duties effectively.



**■ Prison Officers: Job Satisfaction**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[64591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on prison officer morale of the Government's public-sector pay policies.

**Victoria Atkins:**

As part of developing pay proposals and future strategy, staff morale is carefully considered alongside other prison workforce objectives, affordability and value for money for the taxpayer. Staff morale levels are driven by a range of factors – of which pay is one. When making decisions over pay, it is important that the department balances investment proportionally across these issues.

**■ Prison Officers: Long Covid**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[64593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prison officers have been diagnosed with long-covid, by grade.

**Grahame Morris:** [\[64594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to help support prison officers diagnosed with long-covid.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of prison staff is a priority and we have worked closely with public health experts to protect everyone in prisons during the pandemic.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) does not hold information on the number of staff identified as having 'long-COVID.'

HMPPS provides a post-Covid syndrome management referral service for employees with symptoms of Covid-19 for over 12 weeks. We recognise that symptoms can be unpredictable and fluctuate over time and can include, extreme fatigue, breathlessness, muscle and joint pain, chest pain and mental health problems, amongst others.

The post-Covid syndrome service offers an end-to-end rehabilitation plan supporting the employee through their rehabilitation whilst keeping in touch with their manager and providing recommendations for support in the workplace. Following an initial assessment, their manager will receive a report outlining the treatment plan. The employee will then continue into a recommended functional rehabilitation programme (FRP). The focus is on restoration of health while following clinical advice on a safe return to work when the employee is sufficiently fit and well do so.

## ■ Prison Officers: Mental Health

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[64586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prison officers have been diagnosed with mental health problems attributed to violence at work.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We support staff who have experienced violence in the workplace through our occupational health and employee assistance programme service providers, who offer fast track counselling, trauma support and information including signposting to external sources of support. We also have a range of internal support services including prison Care Teams, Mental Health Allies and Staff Support Leads that often provide assistance to employees who have experienced violence at work.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) does not hold data specifically recording prison officers who have been diagnosed with mental health problems attributable to violence at work.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[64588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Attendance Management Policy for prison officers, what consideration is given to prison officers diagnosed with mental health problems.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The HM Prison and Probation Service attendance management policy supports managers and staff to minimise the impact of ill-health on attendance. There is guidance to managers on how to support staff who are experiencing mental health issues or stress at work, and how to consider reasonable adjustments and the support services staff can access. Advice and support for those with diagnosed mental health conditions is provided by suitably qualified clinical professionals from our occupational health services and employee assistance programme providers which includes a 24/7 helpline for advice and support, and counselling interventions if appropriate.

## ■ Prison Officers: Mental Health Services

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[64589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the support available for prison officers diagnosed with mental health difficulties.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[64595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect on the mental health of prison officers of managing prisoners serving indeterminate sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Prison Service has invested substantially in ensuring staff with diagnosed mental health issues can access a range of support services. An Employee Psychological

Services Clinical Lead is responsible for policy and strategy in supporting staff and ensuring mental health support services are appropriate, accessible and effective.

Support includes a 24-hour helpline staffed by counsellors to provide advice and support on any personal or work-related matters. Our contracted occupational health services and employee assistance programme also offer help from clinically qualified professionals who provide assessment, advice, recommendations, adjustments and support for staff with a diagnosis.

Specialist fast track psychological interventions like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Eye Movement and Desensitisation Therapy (EMDR) are also available, for staff who have suffered a work-related trauma.

We recognise the challenging work prison officers are engaged in when managing prisoners serving sentences for a range of crimes, including those on indeterminate sentences. All offender-facing prison staff, from Operational Support Grade up to Governing Governor level, can access regular reflective sessions, with a suitably qualified facilitator, which helps them proactively manage the emotional demands of the role. A range of occupational health, employee assistance and internal staff support services, like Mental Health Allies, are also available.

## ■ Prison Officers: Recruitment

**Grahame Morris:**

**[64590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of effectiveness of his Department's recruitment policy for prison officers.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Prison officers play an essential role in rehabilitating prisoners and keeping the public safe. The process for recruiting and training a prison officer is thorough and managed centrally by dedicated staff working in conjunction with a recruitment supplier.

The current recruitment process for prison officers was first implemented in October 2018 following a full job analysis of the band 3 prison officer job role. This included a refresh to update and future-proof the new assessment framework, by identifying the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics that make a successful prison officer.

Several core behaviours and strengths were identified as being critical for successful performance on the job which were brought together to form a new Prison Officer Success Profile <sup>2018</sup> (POSP). The POSP underpins the full recruitment process for prison officers. Full details of the recruitment process can be found via the careers website ( [Prison officer application tips | HM Prison & Probation Service \(prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk\)](https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk) ).

Since its implementation, the recruitment process has been reviewed on a regular basis by a team of occupational psychologists to ensure candidates are not disadvantaged on the basis of protected characteristics.

In addition, the process's effectiveness is reviewed through candidate experience surveys, with feedback collated and analysed to help inform future improvements to the recruitment system. Quarterly quality assurance sessions are also conducted on the delivery of the Online Assessment Centres.

We continue to review our practices and ensure advertised roles appeal to candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds with the relevant skills. This includes increasing awareness and widening the use of the Civil Service Life Chances Programmes.

## ■ Prison Officers: Resignations

**Grahame Morris:**

[64587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prison officers have left the prison service as a result of violence at work.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The latest HMPPS Workforce Bulletin statistics document the number of prison officers who have left the service in the quarter to 30 June 2021: [Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service workforce quarterly: June 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-june-2021)

The reasons for leaving are broken down by category, however 'violence at work' is not among them and we do not hold data specifically outlining this as a reason for leaving.

While it might be possible to identify staff who have been assaulted and subsequently left the service, we cannot assume causality, and this would not identify staff who left the service as a result of violence against colleagues rather than themselves

## ■ Prisons: Drugs

**Grahame Morris:**

[64577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to minimise the effect of prisoner drug use on the (a) mental and (b) physical health of prison officers.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We are investing £100 million in prison security to reduce illicit items, including drugs, getting into prisons. This includes x-ray body scanners, trace detection machines, and additional drug sniffer dogs, to help keep staff and prisoners safe.

Procedures are in place to reduce the risk of physical contact with substances, and of ingestion or inhalation. We provide an employee support service for anybody who may be affected by issues at work.

## ■ Prisons: Repairs and Maintenance

**Grahame Morris:**

[64583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential (a) savings to the public purse and (b) other merits of installing grills on the windows of prison cells.

**Grahame Morris:****[64584]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of installing grills on the windows of prison cells in each of the last three years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government is committed to preventing escapes and reducing the number of illicit items conveyed into prisons. Window bars can assist in meeting both objectives. Windows are built to a specific technical standard which takes into account security needs. No part of the window should be able to be dismantled to allow concealment or be misused as an aid to escape or injury.

In the financial year ending March 2021 approximately £400,000 (excluding VAT) was spent on installing grills on windows. This estimate may not capture all spending as the systems in place are not set up specifically to retrieve such information. Figures for previous years are unavailable. Windows without bars are being installed in new Category C Resettlement prisons. They have been tested to ensure that they meet HMPPS strict safety and security standards and do not compromise on security, providing protection against damage and contraband smuggling. There is no significant cost difference between the windows being installed and the alternative where bars are used. There should be significant well-being benefits to prisoners' mental health by having windows without bars.

■ **Prisons: Staff****Jackie Doyle-Price:****[64597]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff employed at each women's prison are (a) male and (b) female.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We encourage applications from people from all backgrounds and aim to have a workforce that represents the wider society that we serve. We champion diversity, inclusion and wellbeing and aim to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and a sense of belonging. To find out more about how we do this visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/equality-and-diversity>.

The table below shows how many staff are employed at each women's prison by male and female staff. Further information can be found at Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service workforce quarterly: June 2021 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

**Table 1: HMPPS staff in post in Women's Estate, by gender as at 30 June 2021**

				HEADCOUN T
Area Directorate	Organisation	Female	Male	Grand Total

				HEADCOUN T	
	Women's Estate	Askham Grange	52	27	79
Downview	141	96	237		
Drake Hall	127	68	195		
East Sutton Park	50	26	76		
Eastwood Park	198	98	296		
Foston Hall	156	88	244		
Low Newton	188	92	280		
New Hall	184	117	301		
Send	123	78	201		
Styal	169	105	274		
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1388</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>2183</b>	

**Notes:**

As with all HR databases, extracts are taken at a fixed point in time to ensure consistency of reporting. However, the database itself is dynamic and where updates to the database are made late, subsequent to the taking of the extract, these updates will not be reflected in figures produced by the extract. For this reason, HR data are unlikely to be precisely accurate.

■ **Prisons: Unmanned Air Vehicles****Grahame Morris:**[\[64582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of prisoners smashing cell windows for the purposes of allowing the receipt of drones carrying contraband.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government is working hard to deter, detect and disrupt the illegal use of drones. We conduct assessments across the estate to understand risk and consider targeted countermeasures. Improvements to cell windows is one factor which is reviewed in the course of making these assessments as well as other physical upgrades.

Windows are built to a specific technical standard which takes into account security needs. It specifies that the method of construction for all parts of the window are to be robust and must have secure fixings placed outside the reach of prisoners. No part of

the window should be able to be dismantled to allow concealment or be misused as an aid to escape or injury.

Prisons and police work closely together on criminal drone activity – helping to secure more than 51 convictions since June 2016. Those sentenced are serving a total of 159 years in prison.

## ■ Prosecutions

**Alex Cunningham:** [67145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of all defendants have not entered a plea since the introduction of the Single Justice Procedure.

**James Cartlidge:**

Data regarding the plea entry of defendants at the magistrates' courts from 2010 – 2020 can be found in the attached (Table 2). This data is published as part of the annual release of magistrates' courts timeliness information and can be found at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/996078/time\\_mags\\_tool.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/996078/time_mags_tool.xlsx)

### Attachments:

1. Table [2021-11-04 PQ 67145 table.xlsx]

## ■ Prosecutions: Children

**Alex Cunningham:** [67144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of criminal cases in which children were defendants have been summary-only offences in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The requested statistics can be found in the table below. They have been extracted from the [Outcomes by offence data tool](#), which can be found on the [Criminal justice system statistics quarterly: December 2020](#) web page.

CALENDAR YEAR	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total	17,226	14,947	12,399	9,877	6,890
Summary-only offences					
Summary-only as %ge of all offences	48%	45%	44%	39%	35%



## ■ Prosecutions: Disability

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[67143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of defendants who have been prosecuted under the Single Justice Procedure in each of the last 5 years have disabilities.

**James Cartlidge:**

Information regarding disabilities of defendants is not centrally held within the criminal courts data collated by the Ministry of Justice. This information may be obtained through a manual search of court records, but to do so would incur disproportionate costs.

## ■ Secure Training Centres: Children

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[64628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in secure training centres.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The government is committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of children at Oakhill, which is managed by G4S, and have sought to reduce the operational capacity to less than 50% to address instability and more appropriately support the children currently residing at the centre. G4S is also increasing support to better meet the needs of children with a focus on staffing, education, psychology services and mental health support. In addition, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is also robustly holding G4S to account using the contractual levers available to it under the terms of the contract.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

## ■ Building Safety Fund: Leeds

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[67059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what progress is being made with the application to the Building Safety Fund in respect of X1 Aire, Cross Green Lane, Leeds, LS9 8BJ.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department has received a registration to the Building Safety Fund for the above building. The Department has recently received further information regarding the building. This is being reviewed by the DLUHC technical team for a determination on whether the building is eligible for funding.

The Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress their registrations for the Building Safety Fund. Progress is communicated to registrants who we expect will ensure that their residents are kept fully informed.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[67061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason the application to the Building Safety Fund to replace exterior zinc cladding on wooden battens at the Gateway building in Leeds was refused.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[67062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in how many cases have applications to the Building Safety Fund been approved to replace exterior zinc cladding attached to wooden battens.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 64550 on 1 November 2021 and to the eligibility criteria for the Building Safety Fund. Building owners are made aware of why their building is ineligible when a decision is made.

## ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Bob Stewart:** [\[65395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, on what date he expects to deliver the Government's commitment to withdraw the January 2020 consolidated advice note.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Consolidated Advice will shortly be retired. We are developing more risk-proportionate guidelines for fire risk assessors, including PAS 9980 and new statutory fire safety guidance which will be published as soon as possible.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[67060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether buildings with external zinc cladding attached to timber battens would qualify for an A1, A2, A3 or B1 fire safety rating.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[67063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the installation of sprinklers in a building over 18 metres in height is sufficient to give it a B1 or higher safety rating.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has always been clear that a risk-based professional judgement should be made regarding the safety of a building's external wall system and would encourage building owners to consult a competent professional who will be able to advise.

A number of factors should be considered when considering the external walls of buildings such as building height, cavity barrier provision, ability to pass a large-scale test (i.e., BS 8414/BR135) and consideration of other fire safety measures such as sprinklers. We cannot comment on specific building situations, however we would

always encourage those undertaking these assessments to use an approach proportionate to the level of risk in each building.

We are developing more risk-proportionate guidelines for fire risk assessors, including PAS 9980 and new statutory fire safety guidance.

#### ■ **Cemeteries: Repairs and Maintenance and Security**

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[64739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that there is a sufficient local provision of graveyards and cemeteries in place and that those sites are kept maintained and secure.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Department does not hold data on the local provision of graveyards and cemeteries. Local authorities play a vital role in providing essential services to their communities, and they are best placed to determine local provision.

#### ■ **Holocaust Commission**

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[\[65356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56731 on the Holocaust Commission, what progress has been made to date in implementing the recommendation of the Holocaust Commission relating to an endowment fund to secure the long-term future of Holocaust education.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation has been established to advise the Government on all the recommendations made by the Holocaust Commission in their 2015 report. Good progress is being made with the implementation of that report and updates on specific elements will be provided at the appropriate time.

#### ■ **Housing Associations: Mergers**

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[65522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Social Housing Regulator's (a) oversight and (b) scrutiny of housing association mergers.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[65523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what comparative assessment he has made of the standard of service provided to residents (a) prior to and (b) following the merger of housing associations.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[65524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of ballots for residents in housing associations to decide whether to go ahead with mergers.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[65526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of proposals to merge One Housing Group with Riverside Housing.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Registered providers of social housing are required to comply with the regulatory standards set by the independent body, the Regulator of Social Housing. These include a 'Governance and Financial Viability standard' which requires, amongst other things, that private registered providers ensure they have effective governance arrangements that deliver their aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. Among other things, those arrangements shall ensure that they are accountable to tenants, the Regulator and relevant stakeholders. These same requirements apply before and after any merger.

In addition, the Regulator's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard requires that where a registered provider is considering a merger that will entail a change in landlord for one or more of their tenants, they must consult with affected tenants in a fair, timely, appropriate and effective manner. The proposals must set out clearly any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants and the registered provider must be able to show how they have taken account of the views of affected tenants in reaching a decision.

The Regulator does not have a direct role to play in assessing the merits of potential mergers. As a consequence of measures introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016, non-profit registered providers are no longer required to seek the Regulator's consent for restructures. They are, however, required to notify the Regulator when undertaking certain corporate restructures, including mergers.

It is for the Board of a registered provider to carefully consider the option of a merger taking into account all of the necessary requirements.

Housing associations are independent organisations and Government does not control the way in which they run their business or form their organisational structure. It would not be appropriate for the Department to comment on the merits of this particular merger.

## ■ Housing: Owner Occupation

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[67121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of strengthening consumer protections for the owners of new build properties.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government is committed to strengthening consumer protection for the owners of new build homes. The Government is bringing forward provision for a New Homes Ombudsman scheme in the Building Safety Bill, which will improve homebuyer protection and redress. The Bill includes provision to require developers to become members of the ombudsman scheme, which will provide dispute resolution to homebuyers with complaints about their developer, and for a developers' code of practice about the standards of conduct and standards or quality of work expected of members of the scheme.

Housing is a devolved matter and the provisions are for England. We are in discussions with the devolved administrations about the New Homes Ombudsman provisions, and they are considering how this policy might be taken forward in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**Housing: Solar Power****Nadia Whittome:**[\[67320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to ensure all new homes have solar panels fitted.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Renewable energy, such as that generated from solar panels is a key part of our strategy to get to net zero via a decarbonised electricity grid. We must therefore take the opportunity, where appropriate, to fit solar panels.

However, many homes may not be suitable for solar panels - perhaps because of shading, the orientation of the building, the shape/size of the roof or visual amenity.

Our approach to drive decarbonisation in buildings will see a tightening of energy efficiency standards with an interim 2021 Part L building standards uplift paving the way for the Future Homes Standard in 2025 which will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% lower CO2 emissions compared to those built to current standards.

Our approach remains technology-neutral and developers will therefore retain the flexibility they need to use the materials and technologies that suit the circumstances of a site and their business to achieve these targets. This includes the use of solar panels where appropriate.

**Housing: Urban Areas****Helen Hayes:**[\[65482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the affordability of housing in urban areas on (a) overcrowding in housing and (b) covid-19 transmission rates.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Housing supply and tackling affordability is critical to reducing overcrowding. At Spending Review 2021, the Government announced over £20 billion in multi-year capital investment, unlocking up to a million homes over its lifetime. The Government also reconfirmed the £11.5 billion for the new Affordable Homes Programme, which will deliver up to 180,000 new homes for affordable home ownership and rent, should economic conditions allow.

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has continuously monitored emerging evidence to understand the effect of household overcrowding on public health. We have responded at pace since the onset of this pandemic to provide a range of guidance to support those living in overcrowded, shared or multi-generational housing. We previously published streamlined guidance for those living in shared and overcrowded housing with practical steps to reduce the risk of catching or passing on Covid-19 in the home.

**Local Government Finance****Steve Reed:**[\[67169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether it remains his Department's policy to reduce the number of funding schemes in which local authorities make competitive bids.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government believes that providing local authorities with the freedom to use funding in a way that responds to local needs and priorities is key to supporting financial sustainability and sound financial management. The Local Government Finance Settlement and the vast majority of local government's Core Spending Power (£51.3 billion) is un-ringfenced, giving local authorities flexibility over their spending decisions.

There are times when dedicated competitive biddable funding streams are the best way to make sure local government receives the support, they need to deliver the Government's objectives, including specific funding initiatives, trials or pilots. In such circumstances, Ministers will look to maximise value for money by considering the timing, value and conditions attached to any funding.

**Local Government: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[64669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken through his Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 to help ensure that local authorities will be able to fund ongoing covid-19 management costs.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Councils have been essential to the national response to COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, we have committed over £12 billion to local authorities to tackle the

impact of COVID-19 on their services, over £6 billion of which is un-ringfenced in recognition that they are best placed to decide how to meet the major COVID-19 pressures in their local areas.

## ■ **Mobile Homes: Fees and Charges**

**Julian Sturdy:**

[64598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans his Department has to amend the Mobile Homes Act 1983 to use CPI rather than RPI as the measure of inflation for the purposes of annual pitch fee reviews for park homes.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government remains committed to improving protections for park home residents and this includes changing the pitch fee review inflationary index from the Retail Prices Index (RPI) to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). We will introduce the required legislation when the parliamentary timetable allows.

## ■ **National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service**

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[65350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will publish the specifications for the National Holocaust Memorial specified in September 2015 and how close proposed sites had to be to Parliament.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The site specification published on 7 September 2015 stipulated a prominent location in Central London

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/459046/National Memorial and Learning Centre.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/459046/National_Memorial_and_Learning_Centre.)

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[65351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56726 on the cost of the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, for what reason that answer did not provide the information requested about the (a) category of project, (b) mitigation factor and (c) optimism bias factor used.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Separately identifying elements of the project appraisal would risk a misleading answer. The HMT Green Book is the Government's comprehensive guidance on project appraisal.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[65352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56726 on the cost of the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, on what dates the independent verification of the planned mitigation relating to optimum bias took place.



**Kemi Badenoch:**

Independent verification is ongoing as part of the programme management arrangements.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[\[65353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 56730 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what assurances the Government has received on progress in raising the £25 million of private funding required for the National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the private funding required will be available before main construction begins.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government receives regular progress updates. Funding arrangements will be in place before main construction begins.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[\[65354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 56730 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, in what form the commitment to provide £25 million of private funding for that centre was made; and if he will publish the wording used.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Foundation member, Gerald Ronson CBE, has set up an independent charity to raise the funding and has committed to securing pledges of at least £25 million.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[\[65355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56728 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, what criteria will determine the appropriate time for providing more detailed figures; and for what reason those criteria are not currently met.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The timing of publication will depend on the chosen operating model.

**Sir Peter Bottomley:**

[\[65357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56727 on the National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, whether the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation made approximate estimates of the cost of creating that centre on each of the three sites shortlisted in January 2016 by CBRE; and what the basis was for its conclusion that one of the sites was cost prohibitive.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Foundation's assessment of sites identified by CBRE, and all other alternatives considered, was set out in Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the planning application and published on Westminster City Council's website.

## ■ Permitted Development Rights

**Steve Reed:**

[\[67172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to publish a full Regulatory Impact Assessment for the introduction of the permitted development right, to enable the change of use from the new Class E to residential use, which came into force on 1 August 2021.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As previously stated we aim to publish a full Regulatory Impact Assessment on the measures in due course and in accordance with the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015.

## ■ Rented Housing: Reform

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[65377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what plans he has to deliver reforms for renters through the proposed renters reform bill.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government remains committed to building back fairer and delivering a better deal for renters. We will publish a White Paper in 2022 which sets out a package of reforms to create a fairer private rented sector that works for both tenants and landlords. This will include further detail on repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, and on targeted enforcement measures that drive out criminal landlords. We will explore the merits of a landlord register as part of this work.

We are undertaking robust and structured stakeholder engagement, working closely with the sector to inform our plans, while also learning from impact of the pandemic on the sector. We will bring forward legislation in due course, following the publication of the White Paper.

## ■ Secure Accommodation: Young People

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[64721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department has taken to help enable local authorities directly provide secure accommodation for young people who require that accommodation.

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[64722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of local authority provided secure accommodation for young people as compared with other forms of secure accommodation.

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[64723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of (a) demand for and (b) supply of secure accommodation for young people (a) in the UK, (b) by nation and (c) by region.

**Eddie Hughes:**

We agree that it is important that people, especially young people, have a settled and suitable home. To support this work, we have put in place bespoke support for local authorities through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes a dedicated youth homelessness advisor team that works with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.

Furthermore, since 2018/19, as part of the Government's rough sleeping strategy, the Department for Education has provided funding to local authorities with the highest number of care leavers at risk of homelessness/rough sleeping. This funding allows them to employ specialist Personal Advisers to provide intensive support to small caseloads of care leavers most at risk. In 2021-22, we are providing £2.7 million to 56 local authorities. Overall, the Government has committed over £800 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year, further demonstrating the Government's commitment to end rough sleeping this Parliament and fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Construction

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[65376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the build rate for new social and council housing.

**Christopher Pincher:**

It is for local planning authorities to define what homes are required in their areas, as they are best placed to understand the needs of their communities. The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing and is investing over £12 billion, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which will provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow. 32,000 of these will be for social rent and half will be for affordable home ownership. We have also introduced measures to make it easier for local authorities to build new affordable homes.

In March 2021, we announced a package of reforms to give councils more freedom in how they can spend the money they receive from Right to Buy sales to help them build more council homes. This is on top of the removal of Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap in 2018, enabling local authorities greater flexibility to borrow for building.

## ■ Take-away Food: Urban Areas

**Peter Gibson:** [\[65511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what further powers in the planning system can be provided to local authorities to manage the number of fast food restaurants in town centres.

**Peter Gibson:** [\[65512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of existing powers local authorities have to manage the number of takeaway food outlets in town centres.

**Peter Gibson:** [\[65513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of limiting the number of takeaway food outlets permitted in town centres.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Planning permission will always be required to create or change use to a hot food takeaway. This will allow local planning authorities to fully consider any such proposals through the planning application process, in line with the local plan for the area.

Planning practice guidance is clear that planning policies and supplementary planning documents can, where justified, seek to limit the proliferation of particular uses where evidence demonstrates this is appropriate (and where such uses require planning permission), and many local planning authorities have done so.

## ■ UK Community Renewal Fund

**Steve Reed:** [\[67170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, by what date his Department requires funding from the Community Renewal Fund to be spent.

**Neil O'Brien:**

As part of the announcement of successful UK Community Renewal Fund projects we have extended the project activity and time to spend funding to 30 June 2022.

**Steve Reed:** [\[67171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to publish full details of how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will function.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Further details on the UKSPF will be published in due course.

## ■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[67150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will include a research and innovation focus.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help people access opportunity in places in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and for people in disadvantaged groups across the UK.

Further details on the UKSPF will be published in due course.

## ■ Urban Areas: Children

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[59852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will give local authorities greater powers over bars, pubs and other licensed premises to create Child Friendly Cities.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

*[Holding answer 25 October 2021]:* Licensing authorities have a number of options available to them to manage licensed premises and decisions about what conditions might be appropriate are made at a local level.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

## ■ Anniversaries: Northern Ireland

**Ruth Jones:** [\[64738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with the Irish Government on the arrangements of events to mark the centenary year of the creation of Northern Ireland.

**Conor Burns:**

As part of the New Decade, New Approach deal, the UK Government committed to mark the Centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021 in a spirit of mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation, in line with the Principles for Remembering. The Centenary programme presents a unique opportunity to celebrate Northern Ireland's contribution to the UK and highlight its people, places and products.

The Government's approach has been to provide an opportunity to reflect on the past while building for the future, facilitating national recognition and international awareness of this significant anniversary, which represents not just the Centenary of Northern Ireland, but also of the United Kingdom as we know it today.

The Centenary Programme was devised to mark historical anniversaries, reflect on the historical aspects of the Centenary through an expert Historical Advisory Panel, and, through consultation with a cross community Centenary Forum, along with a

number of other UK and international stakeholders, deliver a forward looking programme of events and support Northern Ireland on its path towards economic recovery following the Covid pandemic.

Representatives from the Irish Government's Department for Foreign Affairs have been involved throughout, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has had regular discussions with the Irish Government on a range of matters, including on marking the Centenary as an important milestone within the Decade of Centenaries.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Contingencies Fund: Scotland

**Ian Murray:**

[\[67124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Written Statement on Contingencies Fund Advance, 29 October 2021, HCWS359, what discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the £12 billion advance from the Contingencies Fund; and for what reason the advance is required.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement on 29 October, the £12 billion contingencies fund advance will meet the Scottish Government's cash requirement in advance of parliamentary approval at Supplementary Estimates 2021-22, at which point this advance will be repaid. The Scottish Government is operating within its budgets, so this does not represent additional expenditure, but ensures they have the cash they need on top of what was included at Main Estimates.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Philip Davies:**

[\[904025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Bradford Council on its timetable for completing the feasibility study into the Shipley eastern bypass.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We are waiting for Bradford Council to submit the initial business case which will then be assessed.

### ■ Aviation: Exhaust Emissions

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[65379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to reduce carbon emissions from the aviation industry.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government has recently consulted on its proposed approach to reach net zero aviation – or Jet Zero - by 2050. The responses are now being analysed to inform our final Jet Zero Strategy which we aim to publish early in 2022.

This consultation proposes principles and policies to reach net zero aviation by:

- o improving the efficiency of the UK's current aviation system
- o accelerating the development and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels
- o supporting the development of zero-emission flight
- o ensuring we use markets to drive down emissions in the most cost -effective way

To help achieve our ambitions, in July 2020, we established the Jet Zero Council to drive the delivery of new technologies and innovative ways to cut aviation emissions. Its aim is to deliver zero emission transatlantic flight within a generation.

The Government's Net Zero Strategy published on 19 October confirms our commitment to Jet Zero, kick-starting commercialisation of UK sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) with £180 million funding for SAF demonstration plants, a key step to delivering our ambition for 10% of aviation fuels to be SAF by 2030.

**Biofuels****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[67067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the change from E5 unleaded petrol to E10.

**Trudy Harrison:**

E10 petrol (petrol containing up to 10% bioethanol) was introduced as the standard petrol across Great Britain in September. The impact assessment published alongside the Motor Fuel (Composition and Content) and the Biofuel (Labelling) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2021, which introduced E10, estimates that the change from E5 unleaded petrol to E10 is expected to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by around 0.7 to 0.8 megatonnes per year.

**Chile: Travel Restrictions****Fleur Anderson:**[\[67284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason Chile was only removed from the red travel list on 8 October 2021.

**Robert Courts:**

Decisions on red list assignment and associated border measures are taken by ministers, who take into account the UKHSA risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors. Chile remained on the red list until 10 October 2021 due to the ongoing detection of variants of concern in the country.

Given the success of the vaccination programme in the UK and the latest evidence of variants across the world, including the fact that the Delta variant is now dominant in



many countries as it is in the UK, Chile was removed from the red list on 11 October 2021.

## ■ Community Transport

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[67293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to relax section 19 or section 22 licences for charities or community-interest-companies, such as Weardale Community Transport, to enable those organisations to run services for social benefit that enable them to cross subsidise free community services.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government understands that community transport operators provide vital services that both encourage growth and reduce isolation by linking people with their communities, helping take them to shops, work, school, and medical appointments.

There are a number of requirements which need to be fulfilled in order to operate under a section 19 or section 22 Community Transport permit. One of the potential exemptions from legislation for 'not-for-profit' organisations is that the operator provides transport services for exclusively non-commercial purposes.

A judgment from a Judicial Review made clear that where an operator provides road passenger transport services simply for the purpose of generating surpluses to fund other transport or non-transport activities, the operator does not fall within the exclusively non-commercial purposes exemption.

However, cross-subsidies are not completely precluded. For example, if an operator providing rural bus services is doing so for the sole purpose of social welfare, then the fact that some routes are profitable whilst others are not, does not prevent it from falling within the non-commercial purposes exemption, despite an element of cross-subsidisation between different routes.

## ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

**Bill Wiggin:**

**[67081]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology used by his Department to estimate the number of electricity public charging points required for road vehicles by (a) 2025, ((b) 2030, (c) 2035 and (d) 2040.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government will publish an electric vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy later this year to set out the vision and action plan for charging infrastructure rollout needed to successfully achieve the phase out of all new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 and for all to be zero emission at the tailpipe by 2035. This will discuss possible ranges for the numbers of chargepoints required, recognising that charging habits are likely to evolve over time, and that needs will differ between local areas. In particular, it will set out the different types of charging that will be needed to support drivers without off street parking, including on-street and destination charging in local areas alongside on-route rapid chargepoints. Where appropriate, the Infrastructure Strategy

will include more information on methods used to estimate the number of EV public chargepoints needed.

## ■ Electric Vehicles: Motorcycles

**Bill Wiggin:**

**[66169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to ensure sufficient availability of electricity charging points for electric motorcycles.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The UK is a global front-runner in supporting provision of charging infrastructure along with private sector investment. Our vision is to have one of the best infrastructure networks in the world for electric vehicles, including electric motorcycles, and we want chargepoints to be accessible, affordable, and secure. Building on the £1.9 billion from Spending Review 2020, the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles has secured an additional £620 million to support the transition to electric vehicles, supporting the large-scale deployment of chargepoints at pace and plug-in vehicle grants. We have also committed to consult on a date to end the sale of new non-zero emission motorcycles.

Government and industry have already supported the installation of more than 26,000 publicly available charging devices. This includes more than 4,900 rapid devices.

Government's plans for EV infrastructure are set out in more detail in the 2035 Delivery Plan and, later this year, we will publish an EV Infrastructure Strategy.

Some electric motorcycles use a 'Type 2' connector to charge, which is required for A.C. chargepoints under the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulations 2017 (AFIR). There are some electric motorcycles coming to market which can rapid charge and some models, such as electric mopeds, have detachable batteries that can be brought inside and plugged in with a standard 3-pin plug for example, at home or work.

The Government has already committed to ending the sale of all new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 and all new cars and vans must be 100% zero emission at the tailpipe by 2035. The growth of the large markets for these vehicles over the next 15 years will encourage investment in the charging infrastructure, meaning there will be knock on benefits for the zero emission L-category sector, such as electric motorcycles.

## ■ Great British Railways: Carbon Emissions

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[67237]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps Great British Railways will take to help achieve net zero.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Once established, Great British Railways (GBR) will bring forward costed options to decarbonise the rail network to meet the government's commitment to a net-zero society as part of the 30-year strategy.

GBR will also introduce a number of passenger-focused reforms designed to encourage greater use of the railways and fulfil its role as a public service that supports achieving net zero across the whole economy and transport system. This includes the introduction of better value, simpler fares; expansion of modern payment methods; and new passenger service contracts with incentives for private sector providers to run high-quality and punctual services.

**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Leeds****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[67238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the costs of the initial phases of HS2 have impacted the decision on delivering the eastern leg to Leeds.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department will soon publish its Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) which will look at how best to deliver major rail investments in the North and Midlands including HS2 Phase 2b Western and Eastern legs, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the East Coast Main Line, so that the benefits of these investments are delivered to passengers and communities more quickly.

**■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Facilities****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[64642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve roadside facilities for HGV drivers.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government recognises the need to ensure hauliers have access to appropriate services and facilities.

This week, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced we will be investing £32.5 million in roadside facilities for HGV drivers on the road.

The Department will continue to engage with key stakeholders to encourage the development of more safe, secure, and high-quality lorry parking to improve driver welfare.

**■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Females****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[64640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the number of women in the workforce within the HGV industry.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Government is aware of the demographic imbalances in the HGV driver workforce including the lack of women drivers, under 25s and drivers from ethnic minorities. Addressing these issues and creating a workforce that will better reflect society will be key to permanently solving the driver shortage.

This will be for the industry to lead but the Government will continue to support where it can, such as through the investment of £32.5 million in roadside facilities for HGV drivers, announced in the Spending Review. In addition, the Department will continue to engage with key stakeholders regarding improving the accessibility of facilities for women drivers and increasing the provision of overnight lorry parking.

**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[64641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of women working in the HGV industry.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Industry estimates suggest that women make up around 14% of the total logistics industry workforce. The Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey suggests that around 4,000 HGV drivers are women but that the sample is too small for a reliable estimate of a percentage of the total workforce.

**■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies****Jim Shannon:**[\[64614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on tackling the shortage of HGV drivers; and if he will make statement.

**Trudy Harrison:**

We have engaged with devolved administrations through cross-Government discussions, which involves topics such as the recruitment of HGV drivers.

**Kim Leadbeater:**[\[64762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the ongoing shortage of heavy goods vehicle drivers.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Cabinet Ministers attend regular meetings organised by the National Economic Recovery Taskforce (NERT) to agree measures and actions to address the heavy goods vehicle driver shortage. Cabinet Ministers also engage in smaller groups to discuss specific policy areas.

**■ Low Emission Zones: Greater London****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[66184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone in London.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Transport in London is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL). While the Department for Transport works closely with TfL on a range of issues, the operation and monitoring of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is entirely a matter for them.

**Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[67099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average length of time taken by the DVLA is to remove an untaxed vehicle once reported; and if he will take steps to accelerate the process of removing the untaxed vehicle with registration SB07 ZWK, abandoned outside St Anne's Church on St Anne's Road Denton, which has been reported on 27 August, 30 September and 25 October 2021 by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) wheel clamping contractor covers the whole of the UK and visits different areas on a daily basis. Officials will bring the vehicle mentioned to their attention and ask them to visit the area specified as soon as possible.

However, the removal of abandoned vehicles is the responsibility of the relevant local authority. At times an overlap in enforcement activity may occur as an abandoned vehicle may also be unlicensed.

**Northallerton-Saltburn Railway Line: Electrification****Andy McDonald:**[\[67173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 58484 on Railways: Electrification, what plans he has for the electrification of the line from Northallerton through to Middlesbrough and Saltburn.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government remains committed to rail decarbonisation to meet our 2050 net zero target and electrification will play an important part in this. This commitment was set out in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan. To deliver that, the Department will consider potential schemes, guided by Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS), ensuring that they can be delivered efficiently and affordably.

**Railways****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[67235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to improve east to west rail connectivity.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Spending Review settlement sees continued record levels of investment in rail enhancements across England and Wales, with increased budgets up to 2025. The government is continuing to progress plans for East West Rail, with a preferred route alignment for Bedford to Cambridge to be published in due course, and a statutory consultation taking place in 2022. The railway between Bicester and Bletchley is already in delivery.

£589m of Transpennine Route Upgrade funding was announced in July 2020. This will secure extensive reliability, capacity and journey time improvements between Manchester and York, via Huddersfield and Leeds. £317m of investment was announced in May 2021, primarily to commence early works including electrification and upgrades between Church Fenton and York.

**Railways: North of England****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[67234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what timescales are in place for the delivery of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) will shortly recommend the funding, delivery, and sequencing profile of the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) programme.

**Shipping: Training****Grahame Morris:**[\[65407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the link between the tonnage tax and UK seafarer training.

**Robert Courts:**

In reviewing these reforms over the last year, officials from the Department for Transport have held extensive discussions with their HM Treasury counter parts regarding the link between tonnage tax and UK Seafarer training.

**Taxis: Coronavirus****Kim Leadbeater:**[\[64761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government has taken to support taxi and private hire vehicle drivers during the period of reduced demand as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The majority of taxi and PHV drivers are self-employed and were therefore able to apply for grants through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) before the scheme closed on 30 September 2021.

Drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles may also have been eligible for other sources of support, including locally administered grant funding. An online support finder tool was made available to help businesses and self-employed workers determine what support was available to them.

Ongoing engagement with sector stakeholders indicates that demand for taxi and private hire vehicles (PHVs) is very high with PHV operators seeking to increase driver numbers to meet this.

## ■ **Transport: Sexual Harassment**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[67093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list every policy paper, consultation and report focused on tackling sexual harassment on public transport and on streets commissioned and published by his Department since May 2010.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Everyone has the right to feel safe when travelling and using public spaces. The Department for Transport is working closely with Home Office on the Government's cross-departmental strategy to address Violence Against Women and Girls.

Everything the department has published on this important policy issue is in the public domain.

## ■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[67186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of issuing additional guidance for airlines on lateral flow test age exemptions for passengers flying between the different nations of the UK on onward internal domestic flights.

**Robert Courts:**

Eligible fully vaccinated passengers and most under 18s arriving into the UK from non-red list countries are now able to use a cheaper lateral flow test with a free confirmatory PCR test if they receive a positive result.

There are no testing requirements in place for domestic travel between UK nations.

**Henry Smith:**

[\[904031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help make international travel (a) easier and (b) less expensive during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Robert Courts:**

Thanks to our successful vaccine rollout, the government has made international travel easier and cheaper for fully vaccinated passengers from the UK and over 135 countries and territories covered by our inbound vaccination policy.



Eligible fully vaccinated passengers and most under 18s arriving in the UK now only require a lateral flow test on arrival. From 1 November, we removed the last 7 countries from the red list.

The government will continue to keep travel under review and ensure that health measures for international travel remain proportionate and necessary.

## TREASURY

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Christine Jardine:**

**[904023]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in domestic Air Passenger duty on the number of people using air travel for journeys that (a) are under five hours and (b) have a rail alternative.

**Helen Whately:**

At Budget, the Government announced that, from April 2023, it will introduce a new reduced domestic band of Air Passenger Duty (APD), covering flights between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in order to support connectivity across the UK. In addition, the Government will introduce a new ultra long-haul band, which will ensure that those who fly furthest, and have the greatest environmental impact, will pay the most.

Full details of the consultation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-aviation-tax-reform>

### ■ Air Passenger Duty

**Sarah Olney:**

**[904013]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in domestic Air Passenger Duty on the Government's ability to achieve its aviation emissions reduction targets.

**Helen Whately:**

At Budget, the Government announced that, from April 2023, it will introduce a new reduced domestic band of Air Passenger Duty (APD), covering flights between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in order to support connectivity across the UK. In addition, the Government will introduce a new ultra long-haul band, which will ensure that those who fly furthest, and have the greatest environmental impact, will pay the most. Domestic aviation accounted for less than 1% of the UK's total emissions in 2019.

Fuel duty is levied on the producers or importers of fuel, and is generally included in the price most drivers pay for petrol and diesel at the pump. Therefore, the more fuel that is consumed, the more fuel duty is paid. As noted in the Autumn Budget and

Spending Review 2021 Policy Costings, there are uncertainties around the behavioural response of the fuel duty freeze.

Transport is a major cost for families and businesses, and to help with the cost of living, the government has frozen fuel duty rates, saving a cumulative £1900 for the average UK car driver, compared to the pre-2010 escalator.

## ■ Air Pollution: Taxation

**Ruth Jones:**

[64734]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal measures he plans to take to help tackle toxic air pollution.

**Helen Whately:**

We are determined to tackle air pollution given its significant negative impact on public health, the economy, and the environment. Air quality has improved significantly over recent decades and will continue to improve thanks to the action we have already taken.

The Government has committed £880m to support Local Authorities to deliver their Air Quality plans. Alongside this, SR21 confirmed a total of £6.1bn of funding to reduce emissions from transport and support low and zero emission public transport and active travel, helping to improve air quality and make progress towards commitments in Bus Back Better and Gear Change.

## ■ Aviation: Taxation

**Adam Afriyie:**

[64567]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the introduction of a frequent flyer levy.

**Helen Whately:**

The government's recent consultation on aviation tax reform sought views on the government's initial position regarding a frequent flyer levy. Having carefully considered the responses to the consultation, the government has confirmed that it remains minded to retain Air Passenger Duty as the principal tax on the aviation sector, noting in particular continuing concerns around the possible administrative complexity and data processing, handling and privacy of a frequent flyer levy.

Full details of the consultation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-aviation-tax-reform>

## ■ Biotechnology: Yorkshire and the Humber

**Rachael Maskell:**

[64670]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, whether the steps he has taken in his Budget will provide support for BioYorkshire.

**Helen Whately:**

The Budget and Spending Review did not allocate funding specifically to BioYorkshire. Departments have received their Research and Development (R&D) budgets for the next three years, and will go through their allocations processes in due course.

**Budgets: Disclosure of Information****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[67134\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2021 to Questions 63715-9 on Budgets: Disclosure of Information, what supplementary guidance he or the Permanent Secretary of his Department has produced or authorised, such that the 2013 Macpherson review wording of section 5.3 on the pre-release of the core of the Budget may be understood as only applying to tax changes with immediate effect; on what date such guidance was circulated to civil servants; by which Minister it was authorized; and whether he will place a copy in the Library.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

HM Treasury takes the recommendations of the Macpherson review seriously, and has followed these in full.

Security and integrity of the Budget and the Spending review process is of the utmost importance to the department and is reiterated regularly to all staff.

**Coronavirus: Vaccination****Chris Law:**[\[66206\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to count the cost of the donated covid-19 vaccine doses as additional to the 0.5 per cent Official Development Assistance budget.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The cost of COVID-19 vaccine donations for 2021 has been additional to the ODA budget set out at the Spending Review 2020 (SR20) for 2021-22, but is expected to remain within 0.5% of GNI given the growth in GNI forecasts since SR20.

Departmental ODA budgets are increasing significantly over the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) period due to forecast growth in gross national income. SR21 fully covers the cost of vaccine donations to meet the Prime Minister's commitment to donate 100 million surplus doses by June 2022, as part of the G7 dose-sharing commitments, to drive an intensified effort to vaccinate the world by 2022.

**Corporation Tax****Sarah Olney:**[\[67227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of supporting the adoption of a global corporation tax rate above 15 percent.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Reaching a Two-Pillar Solution on global tax reform which reallocates taxing rights and introduces a global minimum tax has been a long-standing priority for the UK.

With overwhelming support from across the international spectrum, the Government is delighted that a final political agreement on a Two-Pillar Solution has now been reached amongst 136 countries of the OECD Inclusive Framework and the G20.

Whilst some detailed negotiations are ongoing, key high-level issues, including on the global minimum rate, have now been fully agreed.

Throughout the process, it has been important to balance the differing interests of countries from around the world in what is substantial and complex reform. Consequently, compromise has been necessary to reach this final position.

With that consideration in mind, this historic agreement represents a major multilateral achievement and a significant step forward in making the international tax system fit for the 21st century.

**■ Credit: Debt Collection****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[65423\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish all the responses to the Regulation of Buy-Now Pay-Later consultation.

**John Glen:**

On 21 October the Government published a consultation on the regulation of Buy-Now Pay-Later. The consultation closes on 6 January. Following the conclusion of the consultation and a period to analyse responses received, the government will publish a summary of responses, which will include information about the number of responses received, explain the key themes arising from those responses and the way in which they have informed policy development. This approach is in line with the government Consultation Principles.

**■ Dairy Products: Balance of Trade****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[67292\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the balance of trade is for (a) dairy products, (b) cheese and (c) cream.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HMRC is responsible for the collection and publication of data on UK imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC releases this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics (OTS), which is available via their dedicated website: [www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com).

Published statistics on the import and export of dairy products, cheese and cream are available via this source. Combining these statistics provides an indication of the trade balance.

The relevant goods classification codes can be obtained from the UK Trade Tariff at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/finding-commodity-codes-for-imports-or-exports](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/finding-commodity-codes-for-imports-or-exports).

## ■ Dementia: Finance

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [67162]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Department's Press Release of Saturday October 23 2021 entitled £5 billion pound package in R&D to spur innovation in healthcare, for what reason funding for exploring innovative technologies for diagnosing and detecting dementia was not included in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government has committed £5 billion for health research over the spending review period. This record investment will support cutting-edge research on a wide range of health issues. Tackling dementia remains a priority for this government, and for this reason is one of the Prime Minister's healthcare missions. Specific R&D funding allocations are for the Department of Health and Social Care to make, and will be finalised over the coming months.

## ■ Future Fund

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [67078]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2021 to Question 33130, if he will hold discussions with the British Business Bank to help ensure that the standard terms and eligibility criteria support UK nations and regions to access investment support.

**Helen Whately:**

The government is committed to ensuring that small and medium sized enterprises can access the finance they need, across the UK, including through the programmes of the British Business Bank (BBB). One of the BBB's objectives is to identify and help to reduce imbalances in access to finance for smaller businesses across the UK, including through its specific regional programmes. HM Treasury regularly engages with the British Business Bank on its activities in support of its objectives.

At Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, the Chancellor announced over £1.6 billion for the British Business Bank's regional funds to expand these funds into the North East and South West of England, to set up new funds in Scotland and Wales and to build on its existing programmes in Northern Ireland. In addition, the Chancellor announced a further £150m to the BBB's Regional Angels Programme.

## ■ Help to Buy Scheme

**Gavin Robinson:** [65446]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the £250,000 threshold for purchase under the help to buy ISA scheme in response to rising costs in the property market.

**John Glen:**

The Help to Buy: ISA scheme aims to help those struggling to save enough to get onto the housing ladder. The property price cap of £250,000 for those properties outside London (£450,000 within London) therefore allows the Government to target support at the people the scheme is intended to help.

The latest statistics show that since the scheme was launched in 2015, 410,075 property completions have been supported through the scheme with a mean property value of £175,010 compared to an average first-time buyer house price of £220,406. The Government keeps all aspects of savings policy under review.

**■ International Monetary System****Chris Law:**[\[66205\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to include the rechannelling of IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to low-income countries within the 0.5 per cent Official Development Assistance budget.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The UK's channeling of its Special Drawing Rights (SDR) provides valuable financial support to the poorest and the most vulnerable countries.

Departmental ODA budgets will be increasing significantly over the Spending Review period, from the £10 billion that was allocated in 2020 to at least £12.3 billion by 2024-25. The ODA scored through SDR channelling is additional to these growing departmental ODA budgets and will not require cuts to existing programming. As with all ODA eligible spend, it will count towards the UK's annual ODA spending plans, in line with international rules.

**Layla Moran:**[\[67246\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much and what proportion of the loan of Special Drawing Rights to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust will be designated as Official Development Assistance.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The UK's recent pledge of an additional SDR 1bn to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) will provide valuable financial support to the poorest and the most vulnerable countries.

The UK's loan to the PRGT will count towards the UK's annual ODA spending plans when drawn down over time, in line with international rules. In recent years drawdowns of the UK's SDR loan to the PRGT have scored around 30% ODA.

Departmental ODA budgets will be increasing significantly over the Spending Review period, from the £10 billion that was allocated in 2020 to at least £12.3 billion by 2024-2025. The ODA scored through SDR channeling is additional to these growing departmental budgets and will not require cuts to existing programming.

## ■ Life Insurance: Mental Illness

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[67115]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that people with a mental health disability under the Equality Act 2010 are not denied life insurance cover as a result of their disability or for other discriminatory reasons.

**John Glen:**

The Government is determined that all insurers should treat customers fairly.

Under the Equalities Act 2010, an insurance provider cannot refuse to cover potential customers or charge more for insurance on the basis of an applicant's mental health problem, except in specified circumstances as set out in the legislation.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) sets the conduct standard required of insurance firms in relation to their business. They require firms dealing with all customers, including those with mental health issues and other vulnerabilities, to act honestly, fairly and professionally in accordance with their customers' best interests; to pay due regard to the interests of their customers and treat them fairly; and communicate information to them in a way which is clear, fair and not misleading.

Where the FCA becomes aware that firms are treating customers, including customers with vulnerabilities such as mental health issues, unfairly, they will consider this on a case-by-case basis and use the full range of regulatory and supervisory powers to put things right. They are authorised to impose fines, order injunctions, bring criminal prosecution and issue public censure when disciplinary action against a firm or individual is taken. The FCA sets out their enforcement powers on their website.

The FCA has placed access and vulnerability at the core of its Mission and Business Plan. In February 2021, the FCA published its guidance for firms on the treatment of vulnerable consumers, including those with mental health conditions. This can be accessed here: <https://www.fca.org.uk/publications/finalised-guidance/guidance-firms-fair-treatment-vulnerable-customers>

## ■ Private Education: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[67285]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many private schools claimed support from the Coronavirus Job Support Scheme over the 2021 summer holidays.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was set up to support employers to retain their employees through the Covid-19 pandemic. After running continuously for nineteen months, the scheme closed on 30 September 2021.

The CJRS was available to all employers and employees, provided they met the eligibility criteria. It was therefore not for the Government to decide whether an individual firm should take its staff off furlough – that was a decision for the employer, in consultation with the employee.



There are detailed sector breakdowns for the education sector available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics>.

HMRC also published a list of employers who claimed the CJRS from December

2020 to July 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employers-who-have-claimed-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

## ■ Research: Tax Allowances

**Chi Onwurah:**

[67147]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, how savings to the public purse through restricting R&D tax credits to UK research is planned to be spent; and whether that spending will be counted as public R&D expenditure and so contribute to the Government's 2.4 per cent target for R&D spend as a proportion of GDP.

**Lucy Frazer:**

At Autumn Budget 2021, the Government announced reforms to Research & Development (R&D) tax reliefs to allow data and cloud computing costs to qualify, refocus government support towards innovation in the UK, target abuse, and improve compliance.

Further details of these reforms and next steps for the review of R&D tax reliefs will be published later in the autumn.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[67148]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason pure maths is not included as research for which R&D tax credits can be claimed.

**Lucy Frazer:**

As set out in the definition of Research & Development for tax purposes published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, expenditure on mathematical techniques can qualify insofar as that expenditure is incurred as part of a research project into the physical and material universe.

## ■ Treasury: Protective Clothing

**Gareth Thomas:**

[64532]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information his Department holds on the number of occurrences civil servants in his Department raised concerns regarding the price paid for personal protective equipment from February 2020 to August 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

The Treasury does not hold this information.

## ■ Treasury: Staff

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[67135\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury was physically present in the Darlington Economic Campus on (a) Monday, (b) Tuesday, (c) Wednesday, (d) Thursday and (e) Friday of the week commencing 11 October 2021.

**Helen Whately:**

All HMT offices are open and available for use. Ministers work from both the London and Darlington offices.

**WORK AND PENSIONS**

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Telephone Services

**Stephen Timms:**[\[67047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of calls to her Department's telephone lines for (a) attendance allowance, (b) the Child Maintenance Service, (c) personal independence payment, (d) the State Pension and (e) debt management were answered in each month from January 2021 to October 2021.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Percentage of Calls Answered by DWP telephone lines for **(a) attendance allowance, (b) the Child Maintenance Service, (c) personal independence payment, and (d) the State Pension were answered in each month from January 2021 to September 2021 is shown in the table below**

The table below also shows the number of calls received (i.e. offered to the network) and answered across all of Debt Management's "Pay" and "Recovery" lines, over the period January to September 2021.

The proportion of calls answered is shown as a percentage for each month. Debt Management aims to achieve 90% of calls answered. In the table below there are two months where the percentage fell below 90% (March and September) but for both of these months the number of calls received was higher so placing extra demands on the system.

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Personal Independence Payment New Claims	94.1%	92.4%	94.6%						
Personal Independence Payment New	93.7%	91.9%							

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
Claims Reassessment									
PIP New Claims & New Claims Reassessments				93.3%	89.6%	86.4%	92.0%	93.0%	84.6%
PIP New Claims Special Rules for Terminally Ill	92.6%	92.8%	91.6%	91.0%	92.1%	89.8%	90.7%	89.0%	89.2%
PIP Enquiries	69.9%	73.7%	76.7%	74.3%	76.2%	65.5%	65.5%	71.4%	73.0%
PIP Reassessment Enquiries	87.0%	85.1%	87.4%	89.6%	84.8%	87.4%	88.9%	84.8%	79.0%
State Pension New Claims	61.3%	64.0%	70.1%	81.1%	78.1%	90.9%	88.1%	58.6%	70.0%
State Pension Changes	56.7%	55.2%	53.6%	56.2%	59.6%	58.7%	58.0%	59.7%	58.6%
Attendance Allowance	65.0%	63.9%	66.5%	55.8%	61.4%	65.1%	67.9%	64.3%	63.1%
State Pension Enquiries	87.6%	92.0%	74.8%	67.9%	76.8%	97.3%	90.8%	90.4%	84.6%
Child Maintenance Service	69.9%	70.0%	74.9%	76.4%	74.5%	74.5%	71.3%	73.8%	70.4%
Debt Management "Pay" and "Recovery" Lines	91.4%	90.0%	88.7%	91.8%	92.9%	95.1%	92.4%	91.1%	89.4%

Data Source: BT - Historical Management Information (GI2 – HMI) Serco, G4S

PIP New Claims & PIP New Claims Reassessment lines were combined for reporting purposes from April 21.

October data has not yet been compiled.

The data supplied is derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. The data should therefore be treated with caution.

**Stephen Timms:**

**[67048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time was for calls to her Department's telephone lines for (a) attendance allowance, (b) the Child Maintenance Service, (c) personal independence payment, (d) the State Pension and (e) debt management in each month from January 2021 to October 2021.

**Guy Opperman:**

The average call waiting time (Average Speed of Answer) for calls to DWP Service Lines for **(a) attendance allowance, (b) the Child Maintenance Service, (c) personal independence payment, (d) the State Pension and (e) debt management in each month from January 2021 to September 2021** is shown in the table below in the format of hours:minutes:seconds.

The figures provided for Debt Management have been split between the Pay and Recovery lines.

	JANUAR Y	FEBRUAR Y	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBE R
Personal Independence Payment New Claims	00:02:50	00:03:41	00:02:16						
Personal Independence Payment New Claims Reassessments	00:02:40	00:03:33							
PIP New Claims & New Claims Reassessments			00:02:59	00:05:06	00:06:51	00:03:28	00:02:56	00:07:47	
PIP New Claims Special Rules for Terminally Ill	00:03:06	00:03:53	00:04:00	00:04:08	00:03:59	00:05:01	00:05:36	00:06:00	00:05:11

	JANUAR Y	FEBRUAR Y	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBE R
PIP Enquiries	00:23:17	00:19:19	00:16:50	00:19:24	00:17:40	00:28:01	00:30:44	00:23:30	00:21:46
PIP Reassessment Enquiries	00:00:35	00:00:52	00:00:21	00:00:17	00:00:25	00:00:42	00:00:32	00:01:07	00:01:35
State Pension New Claims	00:21:55	00:21:31	00:15:21	00:10:13	00:12:35	00:04:39	00:06:37	00:26:39	00:17:51
State Pension Changes	00:21:05	00:21:37	00:21:56	00:20:53	00:21:14	00:20:08	00:21:18	00:20:26	00:21:51
Attendance Allowance Total	00:14:05	00:14:48	00:13:57	00:19:27	00:15:18	00:14:22	00:12:35	00:15:05	00:14:57
State Pension Enquiries	00:04:12	00:02:37	00:09:26	00:13:30	00:09:17	00:01:02	00:03:24	00:03:41	00:05:10
Child Maintenance Service	00:20:02	00:20:23	00:16:11	00:15:07	00:16:43	00:17:15	00:19:27	00:19:22	00:20:59
Debt Management "Pay"	00:54	00:51	01:57	0.14	00:29	02:00	00:26	02:01	02:04
Debt Management "Recovery"	06:47	07:05	07:55	05:53	04:40	02:25	05:13	04:40	04:13

Data Source: BT - Historical Management Information (GI2 – HMI) Serco, G4S

PIP New Claims & PIP New Claims Reassessment lines were combined for reporting purposes from April 21.

The telephony system does not use the term “waiting time” but instead provides data on the average speed that the call is answered.

Average Speed of Answer is the average customer wait time from the point of entering a queue to connection to an agent. This figure excludes any time spent in pre-queue messaging and any wait time for calls ultimately abandoned by callers.

October data has not yet been compiled.

The data supplied is derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. The data should therefore be treated with caution.

## ■ Discretionary Housing Payments

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[65360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what consultation her Department undertook with representatives of local government prior to her decision to allocate Discretionary Housing Payment funding for 2021-22 to councils in two tranches.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[65361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations her Department has received from local authorities on the impact of her decision to split the allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment funding for 2021-22 into two tranches on their ability to commit to whole year awards for tenants affected by the benefit cap, spare room subsidy and caps on Local Housing Allowance.

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[65362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has plans to split the allocation of funding for Discretionary Housing Payment into two tranches in 2022-23.

**David Rutley:**

As part of the process for DHP funding allocation, we carry out a written consultation with local authorities. The consultation for 2021-22 funding was carried out in early 2021.

Throughout the pandemic we closely monitored local authorities' Discretionary Housing Payments spending to ensure funds could be targeted appropriately. This was particularly important when furlough and the ban on evictions ended and we reserved part of the funding until mid-year to ensure funds could be targeted to the areas with the greatest need.

At this time, no decisions have been made on the allocation methodology for 2022. We have received representations from local authorities with regards to the split allocation and this feedback will be taken into account when considering future allocation methodology. We will also evaluate evolving demands and trends based on the information local authorities provide on expenditure.

Since 2011, the government has provided over £1 billion of Discretionary Housing Payments funding for local authorities to support those entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit who require further financial assistance towards housing costs.

## ■ Employment and Support Allowance

**Peter Grant:**

[\[63761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of claimants who have reached the end of their 12 month entitlement to contributions-based employment and support allowance before the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments has completed its work capability assessment to determine whether their entitlement remains after the initial 12 month period.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 29 October 2021]:* The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

## ■ Employment and Support Allowance: Work Capability Assessment

**Peter Grant:**

[\[65452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support claimants who are awaiting a work capability assessment for contributions based employment and support allowance and whose assessment will not be able to take place before their award ends.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 2 November 2021]:* We are committed to assessing people as quickly as possible in order that they receive the benefit they are entitled to. Unfortunately, some Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) for contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA(C)) claimants were not completed as quickly as we would have liked due to the the Covid-19 pandemic. The resumption of face-to-face assessments, together with enhanced telephony assessment processes, now allow us to assess all cases. We are prioritising assessments for contributory Employment and Support Allowance claims that have exhausted or are at risk of exhausting.

Furthermore, the measures we implemented during the pandemic remain in place to support ESA(C) claimants at risk of exhausting before a WCA. This includes a dedicated operational team to identify contributory ESA claims that we can progress without face-to-face assessment – for instance, those where further evidence might exist on other DWP benefit systems. If claimants have further evidence they think might help progress their claim, they should contact the Department.

Claimants whose ESA(C) exhausts before they have had a WCA should continue to supply medical evidence (i.e. Fit Notes). This will ensure that their claim can be reinstated if they are found to have limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA) at a future WCA, with any arrears of the LCWRA component paid in full.

Where an individual's contributory ESA ends, they may be able to claim Universal Credit, depending on their personal circumstances.



**■ Employment: Disability****Dr Matthew Offord:****[65419]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will implement further initiatives to help reduce the disability employment 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. 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.

**■ Local Housing Allowance****Ms Karen Buck:****[65363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 56 of Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, Policy Costings, whether Local Housing Allowance rates will be maintained at their 2020-21 levels in 2022-23.

**David Rutley:**

As advised at the Autumn Budget, the forecast default is that Local Housing Allowance rates for 2022-23 will be maintained at the elevated cash rates agreed for 2020-21. This will be confirmed at the uprating review.

In April 2020, Local Housing Allowance rates were increased to the 30th percentile of local rents. This investment of nearly £1 billion provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support in 2020-21 than they would otherwise have received.

Local Housing Allowance rates have been maintained at the same cash level for 2021-22 rather than reverting to previous rates which were much less generous.

For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments are available. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in Discretionary Housing Payments to local authorities for households who need additional support with their housing costs.

**Ms Karen Buck:****[65364]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the additional number of tenants in the private rented sector who may be left facing a rent shortfall if Local Housing Allowance rates are frozen in 2022-23.

**David Rutley:**

The Department has not made an estimate on the additional number of tenants in the private rented sector who would experience a rent shortfall if Local Housing Allowance rates were frozen in 2022-23.

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance rates were increased to the 30th percentile of local rents. This investment of nearly £1 billion provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support in 2020-21 than they would otherwise have received.

Local Housing Allowance rates have been maintained at the same cash level for 2021-22 rather than reverting to previous rates which were much less generous.

For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments are available. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in Discretionary Housing Payments to local authorities for households who need additional support with their housing costs.

**■ Maternity Pay****Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[67267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the level of statutory maternity pay.

**Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[67268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the level of statutory maternity pay on the ability of couples to afford to start a family.

**Guy Opperman:**

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is intended to provide a measure of financial security to allow women in the later stages of pregnancy, and shortly after birth, to take time away from work to protect their health and safety and that of their baby. It is not intended to assist with the costs associated with the birth of a new child or to replace a woman's earnings completely.

The rate of SMP is reviewed annually. Generally, it is increased in line with the Consumer Prices Index. Any decision to amend the rate of SMP would need to be made with consideration to the impact on employers and in the context of the wider public finances.

**■ Mortgages: Older People****Jim Shannon:**[\[64616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to help provide access to additional support for people with mortgages aged over 65 who are on low incomes.

**Guy Opperman:**

Whilst there are no current plans to provide additional support for people with mortgages aged 65 or over who are on low incomes, Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) is available to pensioners who are in receipt of Pension Credit. SMI provides a level of support that is sufficient to protect homeowners from the threat of repossession.

**Pensions****Sarah Olney:**[\[67229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to reduce the cost of transferring (a) workplace and (b) personal pensions overseas through a Qualifying Recognised Overseas Pension Scheme (QROPS).

**Guy Opperman:**

In the same way as transfers to UK pension schemes, a transfer to a Qualifying Recognised Overseas Pension Scheme (QROPS) is covered by the requirement to take regulated financial advice if transferring more than £30,000 from a Defined Benefit scheme. This cost is a commercial matter for the firms and financial advisors who are subject to Financial Conduct Authority authorisation to conduct this activity, and who choose to provide the service.

A transfer to a QROPS may also be subject to the overseas transfer charge (OTC). This is not a cost of transferring, it was introduced to limit the opportunities for tax avoidance so that the generous tax regimes of the UK and the tax rules of other countries cannot be manipulated to provide more relief than was intended. Whilst the Government keeps all policy under review there are no plans to make any changes to the overseas transfer charge at this time.

Transfers to overseas schemes have been connected to pension scams in recent years and this is why HMRC requirements around QROPS were tightened in 2017. My department has been working alongside the FCA on regulations in relation to pension transfers, which aim to facilitate transfers to legitimate schemes while preventing transfers to scams.

**Personal Independence Payment****Dan Carden:**[\[67244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to reduce the backlog of people waiting for personal independence payment claims to be processed.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the Hon member to the answer I gave on 15 September 2021 to Question [UIN 50029](#)

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Deductions

**Layla Moran:**

**[61197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average monetary value was for deductions made from (a) universal credit, (b) employment and support allowance, (c) jobseeker's allowance, (d) income support and (e) pension credit claimant's payments by (i) categories of third party debt deductions, (ii) benefit overpayments and (iii) other types of deductions in May 2021.

**David Rutley:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* The average deduction amount per claim by deduction type, for (a) Universal Credit, in May 2021 is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

Information for **(b) (c) (d) (e) (i) (ii) (iii)** is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting the welfare of claimants who have incurred debt. We seek to balance recovery of debt against not causing hardship for claimants and their families. Processes are in place to ensure deductions are manageable, and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship, in order to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment or a temporary suspension, depending on their financial circumstances. The Department is not able to

change the rate of most Third Party deductions as these are set out in the regulations.

Advances are a claimant's benefit entitlement paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. They ensure nobody has to wait for a payment in Universal Credit and those who need it are able to receive financial support as soon as possible. Claimants can receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

### **Attachments:**

1. PQ61197 Table [PQ61197 Table.xlsx]

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Stephen Timms:**

**[67049]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new claims for State Pension were paid more than four weeks after the claimant's sixty-sixth birthday in each of the last 12 months.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is not collated as part of normal business and is only available at disproportionate cost to the Department.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[63722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants are being deducted the maximum amount of 25 per cent of their standard allowance from their entitlement as a result of an advance or other Government debt.

**David Rutley:**

*[Holding answer 29 October 2021]:* For Universal Credit claims with a payment due during May 2021, 506,000 (10% of all claims) had a deduction of 25% of their standard allowance as a result of an Advance or Government debt.

We reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 40% to 30% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance enabling them to retain more of the award. These changes were implemented from October 2019 to April 2021. These positive measures were put in place to support claimants to manage financial difficulties. Protocols are in place to ensure deductions are manageable and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, or a temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances.

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[67266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to introduce a non-repayable crisis grant for people in financial need who are not eligible for universal credit.

**David Rutley:**

We recognise that some people may require extra support over the winter as we enter the final stages of recovery, which is why vulnerable households across the country will now be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials. The Household Support Fund will provide £421 million to help vulnerable people in England with the cost of food, utilities and wider essentials. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Household Support Fund can also be used to support housing costs.

The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

The Household Support Fund in England has been allocated to Upper Tier Local Authorities. They have the flexibility to deliver their own schemes through a variety of routes, which may include offering vouchers to households, directly providing food or goods, or issuing grants to third parties to provide such services on their behalf.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ **Avian Influenza: Enhanced biosecurity measures introduced**

**Minister of State (Victoria Prentis):**

[\[HCWS375\]](#)

High pathogenicity H5N1 avian influenza has been circulating in Europe in recent weeks. There have now been three confirmed cases in kept birds in Great Britain. One in a wild bird rescue centre in Worcestershire, one in a small backyard flock in Wales and one in kept birds in Angus in Scotland. There have also been several findings in wild birds in north Wales, Lancashire and the east coast of Scotland. The risk of further H5 highly pathogenic avian influenza incursions in wild birds across Great Britain has recently been raised to high and to medium for poultry where biosecurity is poor and remains low where biosecurity is stringent. We will continue to undertake comprehensive disease surveillance over the coming weeks and months.

The UK Health Security Agency advises that the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said there is no food safety risk for UK consumers. The current strain is the European strain of H5N1 and not the Asian strain that has had human health impacts.

In response to the increased risk to poultry and other captive birds, the Department has put in place a statutory avian influenza prevention zone. The zone requires keepers across the country to take additional steps to implement enhanced biosecurity measures and to protect poultry and other captive birds from contact with wild birds. Some of these measures apply to all keepers, including those with small flocks or pet birds. They include:

- cleansing and disinfection of equipment, vehicles and footwear when moving between bird premises;
- effective vermin control;
- reducing movements of people to the essentials for the birds' welfare, collecting eggs and feeding;
- keeping records of poultry, captive birds and egg movements;
- ensuring that buildings are maintained and that repairs are carried out without delay where water or other contamination may penetrate.

There is no published end-date and the zone will remain in place until the risk levels change. The zone will be kept under regular review and amended as necessary in the light of any changes in circumstances.

Given that outbreaks are occurring across Europe and we now have confirmed cases in England, Wales and Scotland, the introduction of this zone has been agreed and co-ordinated with the devolved Administrations, and Scottish and Welsh Governments are

introducing similar measures. Northern Ireland officials, who have been involved in the discussions, are considering their next steps.

We have tried and tested procedures for dealing with such animal disease outbreaks and a strong track record of controlling and eliminating previous outbreaks of avian flu in the UK. Our actions are in line with established practice and with the processes followed in previous years. Avian influenza prevention zones, for example, were introduced in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland in winter 2020/21. We are working closely with delivery partners, devolved Administration colleagues and the industry.

The detections of H5N1 in poultry and captive birds have been dealt with effectively by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. We have taken robust action, imposing zones of up to 10 km (six miles) around infected premises to limit the risk of disease spreading and implementing a stamping out policy humanely culling birds, biosecurely disposing the carcasses, cleansing and disinfecting the site and undertaking tracings to check for possible source and spread.

Looking forward, the Department will keep the avian influenza prevention zone under review and will consider amendments to reflect any changes to the level of risk of incursion to wild birds and poultry as well as any further scientific, veterinary and ornithological advice. We are also considering options on bird gatherings such as shows, sales, auctions, markets, multi-pick-up couriers and hen 'hotels'.

We have not yet required mandatory housing of all poultry and captive birds as part of our response to the disease risk. This measure was last used in winter 2020/21 and had also been used in winter 2016/17. However, such a measure remains under active review as a potentially important step.

We continue to urge bird keepers to be vigilant for any signs of disease, ensure they are maintaining good biosecurity on their premises, seek prompt advice from their vet and report suspect disease to APHA (as they must do by law).

We strongly advise keepers to register on the poultry register so as to receive notifications and disease alerts. This is mandatory for all those with flocks of over 50 birds. Registration is easy and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-including-game-birds-registration-rules-and-forms>

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

### ■ DLUHC update

**Parliamentary-Under Secretary for Levelling Up, the Union and Constitution (Neil O'Brien):** **[HCWS374]**

I welcome the UK Statistics Authority publishing the new Concordat on Statistics between the UK Government and the devolved administrations. This concordat represents a significant milestone in our work to put data at the heart of decision making in government and build on the successful collaboration between the UK Government and



the devolved administrations not least as we have seen in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Collecting and analysing data that is easily comparable UK-wide helps us to share learning. It gives us the power to understand and learn from each other on the success of policies in order that we can collectively deliver the best for citizens across the UK. This concordat sets out the agreed framework for cooperation between the UK Government (including the UK Statistics Authority) and devolved administrations, in relation to the production of statistics, for and within the UK, statistical standards and the statistics profession.

In conjunction with wider agreements on intergovernmental relations, this concordat reflects the commitment of each administration to work together towards a more coherent statistical picture across the UK while recognising that the policy context will not always be identical.

Access to UK-wide data will help to empower leaders across the UK to make the best decisions for their citizens, providing greater insight and opportunities to improve our public services. The Covid-19 pandemic is a prime example of how using UK-wide data can help us tackle common challenges and deliver the best outcomes by working collaboratively with one another.

This concordat represents a renewed commitment to work together to tackle shared challenges. I am grateful for the work of UK Statistics Authority and devolved administrations to agree to this framework. The concordat is signed by the National Statistician, Sir Ian Diamond and the Permanent Secretaries to the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Department of Finance (Northern Ireland), the Second Permanent Secretary in the Cabinet Office, and the Chief Statisticians of the devolved administrations.

The concordat will be made available on gov.uk and a copy deposited in the libraries of both Houses.

## TREASURY

### ■ Treasury Update

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

**[\[HCWS373\]](#)**

Today the government is publishing the Finance Bill 2021-22 which will include a clause to increase the normal minimum pension age from age 55 to age 57 from 6 April 2028. This increase in the normal minimum pension age was announced in 2014 in the response to the consultation on 'Freedom and Choice in Pensions' and the draft clause was published in July 2021. The normal minimum pension age is the lowest age at which the majority of members can take benefits from a registered pension scheme without incurring tax charges, except in cases of ill-health.

This change will not apply to members of certain uniformed public service schemes, nor to those whose scheme rules provide an unqualified right to take benefits before age 57. Members with these rights will have a protected pension age.

The draft clause included a window of time during which people could either join or transfer into a scheme which can offer a protected pension age. The window was designed to ensure that those in the process of transferring a pension could complete their transfer and not unexpectedly lose the right to a protected pension age. Stakeholders have subsequently expressed their concerns about this window running until 5 April 2023 as originally proposed, including possible adverse impacts on the pensions market and on pension savers.

The Government believes it is right to offer a protected pension age to those whose scheme rules give them an unqualified right to take their pension before age 57. The Government also believes it is right that those in the process of transferring their pension do not unexpectedly lose the right to a protected pension age. However, after listening to stakeholder views on the draft clause, the Government has decided to shorten the window. The window closed at 23:59 on 3 November 2021. Those who have already made a substantive request to transfer their pension to a pension scheme with a protected pension age of 55 or 56 will still be able to keep or gain a protected pension age assuming the transfer is completed in accordance with the current regulations. This shorter window will help address the issues raised by stakeholders whilst also being fair for pension savers.

Ordinarily this change to a Finance Bill clause would have been announced at Autumn Budget 2021. On this occasion, giving prior notice of the shorter window ahead of its closure on 3 November 2021 could have led to unnecessary turbulence in the pensions market and led to some consumer detriment. Some pension savers could find themselves with poorer outcomes (or even be the victim of a pension scam) if they were rushed by rogue advisors to make a quick transfer in the short time period before the window closed.

A Tax Information and Impact Note for this clause is also being published today.