



## Daily Report

**Tuesday, 9 November 2021**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 9 November 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 09 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

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Audit: Standards

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[\[67207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the White Paper on Restoring trust in audit and corporate governance, what assessment he has made of whether managed shared audit is the most effect method of audit reform to improve resilience in the FTSE350.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[\[67208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of the introduction of a market share cap, as opposed to managed shared audit, on preventing further corporate failures.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government's White Paper on "Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance: Proposals for Reform" was published in March this year and proposed the introduction of managed shared audit as part of a package of measures, which together aim to improve corporate governance, quality of accounting, auditing and their regulation, and competition and resilience in in the FTSE 350 audit market, for the UK's largest companies.

The Government is currently considering all submissions from stakeholders, in response to the White Paper and will publish a Government response to the consultation in due course.

#### ■ Carbon Capture and Storage

**Ian Murray:**

[\[68209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total cost of the Government's Carbon Capture and Storage programme is to 2030; and what the funding allocation is to each of the two successful bidders from the Track one process.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) clusters will have the opportunity to negotiate for capital support from the £1bn CCS Infrastructure Fund, as well as from the twin-track £240m Net Zero Hydrogen Fund. In addition, further capital support may be brought forward in future spending review period, based on government's assessment of need and value for money to the taxpayer.

No funding allocation has yet been decided on track 1 cluster. Track-1 clusters will now enter a process of negotiations and further due diligence, where the government

will confirm where it is appropriate to provide financial support, and the level of support required to facilitate cluster deployment by the mid-2020s.

## ■ Carbon Emissions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[67205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he expects the UK to halve its carbon budget.

**Greg Hands:**

The carbon budgets currently set in legislation (carbon budgets 1 to 6 covering the period between 2008 to 2037) are among the most stringent in the world. The UK has over-achieved against the first (2008-12) and second (2013-17) carbon budgets, and the latest projections show that we are on track to meet the third (2018-22).

In October, the Government published the Net Zero Strategy, setting out the action it will take to keep the UK track for the UK's carbon budgets and 2030 NDC, and establishes the longer-term pathway towards net zero by 2050.

## ■ Chief Scientific Advisers: Mathematics

**Stephen Metcalfe:**

[67140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of the Government's Chief Scientists have a mathematical background; and if will provide information on the academic backgrounds of the Government's Chief Scientists.

**Paul Scully:**

Most government departments have a Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) to provide scientific advice. A CSA is typically a distinguished scientist or engineer, recruited externally from academia or industry. Of the current cohort of CSAs, two have a purely mathematical background (FCDO CSA & MOD CSA).

However, all CSAs bring deep science and/or engineering knowledge and are able to work fluently across a range of sciences including mathematics.

All current departmental CSAs have their academic background published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/chief-scientific-advisers>.

## ■ Climate Change: Children

**Tim Loughton:**

[68098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to lead by example in their decision-making process on climate change by consulting with children in the UK and overseas to gain their insight as UK policies are developed and reviewed.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The UK COP26 Presidency is committed to amplifying the voices of young people in the UK and across the world leading up to and at COP26. My Rt. Hon. Friend the President for COP26 committed to meeting



with young people in every international visit over the last year and has established the COP26 Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council. The UK is committed to COP26 being inclusive and established several advisory groups to guide planning and delivery of COP. This includes youth and civil society advisory groups co-chaired by youth representatives.

At COP26, the UL has hosted a dedicated Youth & Public Empowerment Day to elevate youth voices and demonstrate the critical role of education and empowerment to drive climate action. We worked closely with YOUNGO (the official children's and youth constituency to the UNFCCC) to co-create the events programme for the day.

As set out in our Net Zero Strategy, we will continue to give people opportunities to participate in and shape our plans for reaching net zero.

## ■ Climate Change: Local Government

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[69137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government will take to ensure that local authorities help deliver the targets set by COP26.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government's Net Zero Strategy was published on October 19<sup>th</sup> and sets out our commitments including those to enable local areas to deliver net zero. The strategy includes the creation of a new Local Net Zero Forum to bring together national and local government senior officials to improve collaboration on policy and delivery options for net zero.

At the Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer set out further information on the funding streams available to Local Authorities to deliver Net Zero local covering all sectors including buildings, transport and environmental initiatives.

## ■ Company Law: Standards

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[\[67209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the new Audit Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA) will take to work in partnership with investors, boards, auditors and other regulators to develop a world-class system of corporate governance in practice.

**Paul Scully:**

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has since December 2019 been undertaking a transformation programme to prepare for its transition to the Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA). As part of this, the FRC has established a dedicated stakeholder engagement team to enable more extensive engagement and dialogue with investors, boards, auditors and other stakeholders on how the UK's corporate governance and stewardship frameworks can continue to improve and embed good

practice. Further details of this expanded outreach programme can be found in section 6 of the regulator's latest Annual Report published in July 2021:

<https://www.frc.org.uk/getattachment/985d9c2a-8a6d-4c8b-8172-06858edfabab/FRC-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2020-21.pdf>.

The new ARGA will take forward this dialogue and partnership working in line with new statutory objectives, as set out in the Government's White Paper on 'Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restoring-trust-in-audit-and-corporate-governance-proposals-on-reforms>.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Layla Moran:**

**[69687]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the 20 million covid-19 vaccine doses to be donated by the Government by the end of 2021 to countries in need, what the expiry date is of those doses; and when the Government plans to deliver them.

**Paul Scully:**

On 30 October, we announced a further donation of 20 million Oxford-AstraZeneca doses. Of this, 10 million has already been sent to COVAX, and 10 million more are due to be delivered in the coming weeks between now and the end of 2021 to some of the world's most vulnerable people. This means that at least 30.7 million doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca will have been donated in 2021.

The UK, COVAX and AZ are working closely together and with international partners such as UNICEF to allocate vaccines according to need, facilitate the rapid delivery of doses and maximise the shelf life available to recipients. This includes the provision of regular forecasts to COVAX to assist planning. Doses are sent directly by AZ to UNICEF, rather than having to be processed by the UK Government. Vaccines delivered by COVAX are distributed in line with the World Health Organisation's 'equitable allocation framework', which helps ensure COVAX doses reach those countries most in need. Recipient countries are informed of vaccine expiry dates, and doses are delivered in consultation with countries via COVAX to ensure they are ready and able to begin immediate roll out.

## ■ **Drax Power Station: Carbon Emissions**

**Rosie Cooper:**

**[67111]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the chimney stack emissions of carbon dioxide were in MWh from the burning of (a) coal and (b) wood pellets at the Drax power station in North Yorkshire in each of the last five years.

**Greg Hands:**

BEIS does not collect this information. This information is held by the Environment Agency (EA), as part of their Pollution Inventory.

## ■ Electricity Generation: Carbon Emissions

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[69624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the National Grid has the capacity to manage a potential increase in demand for electricity as a result of the UK's transition to net zero.

**Greg Hands:**

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

The Capacity Market (CM) is at the heart of the Government's plans for a secure and reliable electricity system. Through the CM, the government secure, the capacity needed to ensure security of supply through a competitive, technology-neutral auction process. The volume of capacity the government procures is based on advice from NG:ESO in the annual Electricity Capacity Report. NG:ESO model a wide range of possible scenarios when producing their advice, including levels of electricity demand. The methodologies and analysis provided by NG:ESO are scrutinised by an independent advisory group appointed by government, the Panel of Technical Experts.

The CM incentivises the necessary investment to maintain and refurbish existing capacity and to finance new capacity, ensuring the transition to net zero happens in a managed way that does not compromise security of supply. This year's auctions have already secured the majority of Great Britain's capacity needs out to 2024/25 and we will continue to work with the NG:ESO to make sure that the transition to net zero is delivered in a manner that ensures the stability and security of the electricity system.

## ■ Energy Supply: Standards

**Mark Jenkinson:**

[\[67265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the energy retail market; what steps his Department has taken to ensure the protection of existing customers whose suppliers fail; and what steps he is taking to reform that market.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government previously committed to assess potential preform of the retail energy market as we transition to net zero. The Net Zero Strategy is clear that the energy retail market must be sustainable and resilient and protect consumers in the transition to net zero. The Government will work with Ofgem to identify the reforms needed to build a resilient market

The Government and Ofgem ensure the customers of companies who exit the market have their credit balances protected and continuity of supply – through a Supplier of Last Resort process.

## ■ Energy: Finance

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[67307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will prioritise funding to improve energy efficiency to create jobs and reduce energy demand over investment in new oil and gas projects.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is committed to improving energy efficiency. We have recently committed £3.9 billion to decarbonising buildings over the next 3 years, taking our total investment to date during this parliament to almost £6.6bn

This will fund the next 3 years of investment through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Home Upgrade Grant scheme, the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, the Heat Networks Transformation Programme and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Alongside these schemes, the Government is already providing energy-efficiency upgrades such as insulation and low-carbon heating to around 50,000 homes through the Local Authority Delivery Scheme. Furthermore, the Energy Company Obligation scheme has installed 3.3 million measures in 2.3 million homes since 2013.

Through our first Net Zero Strategy, published 19 October 2021, we committed to grow green industries and supply chains in the UK, which will support up to 240,000 jobs by 2035, resulting in £10 billion additional GVA in the same timeframe.

## ■ Fossil Fuels: Carbon Emissions

**Sam Tarry:**

[\[67305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government plans to take in response to the conclusion of the International Energy Agency that there can be no new oil, gas or coal development if the world is to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

Since 31 March 2021, the UK Government no longer provides any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, other than in limited circumstances, and is aligning its support to enable clean energy exports.

While the Government is working to drive down dependency for oil and gas, there will continue to be ongoing demand over the coming years, as recognised by the independent Climate Change Committee. Given the maturity of the UK Continental Shelf, even with continued development, the UK is projected to remain a net importer out to 2050. The North Sea Transition Deal sets out a path for the UK to manage the transition away from fossil fuels, with a goal of achieving a net zero basin by this timeframe. Further, as announced earlier this year, the Government will introduce a climate compatibility checkpoint for any new licences which will be used to assess whether any future licensing rounds remain in keeping with its climate goals, including net zero.

The Government has committed to phasing out unabated coal generation in Great Britain by October 2024. Coal's share of our electricity supply has already declined significantly in recent years – from almost 40% in 2012 to less than 2% in 2020.

## ■ **Graduates: Mathematics**

**Stephen Metcalfe:**

[\[67141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is planning to take to help ensure that the number of students undertaking PhD research in mathematics is sustained.

**Paul Scully:**

The UK is a world leader in Mathematics. British mathematicians publish a large volume of highly regarded work. When compared to international colleagues, British mathematicians have the 5th largest share of publications in the world. When looking at the top 1% of most cited publications, UK mathematicians are responsible for the third largest share.

Since January 2020, UKRI has awarded £104 million of additional funding into Mathematical Sciences, over and above EPSRC's core Mathematical Sciences Theme budget. The additional funding has funded institutes, small and large research grants, fellowships, doctoral studentships, and postdoctoral awards.

Following the SR, BEIS will set R&D budgets through to 2024/25. Further details of how this funding will be allocated will be announced in due course.

## ■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[66259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Green Homes Grant deadline for an additional 12 months.

**Greg Hands:**

The Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme was designed to provide a short-term economic stimulus while tackling our contribution to climate change. However, it was not delivering at the rate and scale the government had originally intended, facing a number of delivery challenges. The scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2021 and will not reopen.

Last month, the Government published the Heat and Buildings Strategy which allocated more than £3.9 billion of new funding for decarbonising heat and buildings. This will fund the next 3 years of investment through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, the Home Upgrade Grant scheme, the Boiler Upgrade Scheme and the Heat Networks Transformation Programme and reducing carbon emissions from public buildings through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

## ■ Heat Pumps: Costs

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[68397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of effectiveness of the renewable heat incentive policy in reducing the price of heat pump installations.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* A full evaluation of the effectiveness of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) in incentivising the rollout of renewable heat technologies, including the impact on the cost and quality of heat pump installations, is still in progress. An evaluation report of the domestic scheme will be published after the domestic RHI has closed in March 2022.

## ■ Heating: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[68355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the £3.9 billion allocated in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 to decarbonising buildings, how much additional funding is required to implement the Heat and Buildings Strategy in its entirety; and what plans he has to secure that funding.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Government has committed £3.9 billion to decarbonising buildings over the next 3 years, taking our total investment to date during this parliament to almost £6.6bn. Decisions on further public spending will be subject to the outcome of future fiscal events.

## ■ Heating: Housing

**Peter Kyle:** [\[66245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the merits of gas central heating in providing a more beneficial score in an EPC rating than any form of electrical heating.

**Greg Hands:**

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) use an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) to measure the energy performance of homes based on their estimated running costs. Since energy costs can be a significant outlay, it is important that homeowners and occupiers are aware of the running costs of their home. Basing the rating and recommendations of the EPC on cost ensures that improvements recommended by the EPC will lead to a reduction in energy costs.

The Government continues to keep the metrics on the EPC under review as we develop policy to decarbonise buildings and tackle fuel poverty. Recent consultations on policies that use EPCs, such as minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector, have sought views on different metric options, such as the use of both a carbon-based and cost-based metric.

Furthermore, to ensure electric heat pumps will be no more expensive to run than gas boilers, we want to work with energy providers to reduce the price of electricity over the next decade by shifting levies and obligations away from electricity. We will launch a call for evidence on the different options for rebalancing electricity and gas prices, with a view to taking decisions in 2022.

## ■ Housing: Energy and Standards

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of retrofitting homes to (a) meet sustainable housing standards and (b) cut energy use.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government sees improving the energy efficiency of homes as the best long-term solution to tackling fuel poverty. Improving the energy efficiency of a home means less energy is required to sufficiently heat the home and lower energy demand has the potential to reduce energy bills.

The Government has already committed to investing £9.2 billion in improving the energy efficiency of homes, schools, and hospitals. This work will help to the UK to reach the Government's commitment of net zero emissions by 2050.

This figure includes £500 million for Phases 1 and 2 of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme, which is making energy-efficiency upgrades to low-income homes. Additionally, the Energy Company Obligation has installed 3.3 million measures in 2.3 million homes since 2013.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions

**Nick Smith:**

[\[68175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution by the Minister of State, the right hon. Member for Chelsea and Fulham, on 19 October 2021, Official Report, Column 611, whether he will be taking additional steps to support the steel sector's transition to net zero given the £350 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund is intended for multiple energy-intensive sectors including the steel sector.

**Lee Rowley:**

The Government recognises the vital role that the steel sector plays in our economy and across all areas of the UK. We have taken specific steps to support the steel industry and we will continue to work with the sector regarding its decarbonisation.

In October 2021 we published the Net Zero Strategy, which committed to provide further support for research and innovation through the Net Zero Innovation Portfolio and initiatives led by the Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre to support the fuel switch to low carbon hydrogen on industrial sites.



**Ithaca Energy: Fossil Fuels**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[67118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the compatibility of the Abigail fossil fuel development proposed by Ithaca Energy, with the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[67119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the compatibility of the Pegasus West fossil fuel development proposed by Spirit Energy with the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[67120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the compatibility of the Suilven fossil fuel development proposed by Siccar Point Energy with the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

All previously licensed fields are accounted for in terms of projected production and estimated emissions and the Government is confident that they can be developed, even as the UK seeks to achieve its commitment to net zero by 2050.

**Life Sciences: Finance**

**Catherine West:** [\[67223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will commit to the allocation of new funding for new approach methodologies, including the use of advanced cultures of human cells and tissues, artificial intelligence and organ-on-a-chip technology.

**Paul Scully:**

Following the recent Spending Review, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will set R&D budgets through to 2024/25. Further details of how this funding will be allocated will be announced in due course.

**Mental Health: North East**

**Julie Elliott:** [\[68269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding his Department has provided to mental health research and innovation programmes in the North East in each of the last two years.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department committed £1.81 million in 19-20 and £1.17 million in 20-21 to research projects related to mental health that took place in the North East of England. This includes research at Newcastle University which is looking at the effect



of substance misuse by parents on children and research on the shift to home-based working in the pandemic, including its impact on mental health.

In addition, UKRI has recently made a £24 million investment into seven multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research programmes, across the UK, focussed on adolescent mental health. This includes research which will focus on the wellbeing of students at university where the rate of mental health conditions is rising. The project includes a co-investigator based at Newcastle University with some of the research taking place at the university.

## ■ Nuclear Power Stations

**Virginia Crosbie:**

[\[69215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the economic and strategic value of thermal hydraulic testing to current and future nuclear power plants, including large-scale, small modular reactors and advanced modular reactors.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* Thermal hydraulic testing is essential for designing safe and efficient nuclear power stations and in ensuring their safe operation throughout the many decades they are expected to generate electricity.

The Government are currently considering the business case for national thermal hydraulic research and testing facility, including the economic and strategic benefits such a facility might bring to the UK.

The Government is grateful to my Hon. Friend and other local stakeholders in Anglesey for their active input to this proposal.

## ■ Ofgem: Standards

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[69684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Ofgem market entry requirements which came into effect in January 2021 in preventing company failures.

**Greg Hands:**

The process for awarding supply licenses, including market entry requirements, is independently set by the regulator Ofgem. Ofgem is the independent regulator of the gas and electricity markets in Great Britain and is accountable to Parliament.

## ■ Oil: North Sea

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[68404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is his policy to issue any further drilling permits for oil fields in the North Sea.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* While the Government is working hard to drive down demand for fossil fuels, there will continue to be ongoing demand for oil and gas over the coming years, as recognised by the independent Climate Change Committee, with the UK expected to remain net importers of both oil and gas throughout the transition.

As a result of the review of future oil and gas licensing announced earlier this year, BEIS will introduce a new Climate Compatibility Checkpoint for all future licences. This checkpoint will be just one additional layer of scrutiny on top of the existing rigorous regulatory processes carried out by the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning, and the Oil and Gas Authority's own assessment of net zero impacts as part of its consents process. BEIS will be seeking input on the design of the checkpoint in due course.

**Oil: Shetland****Catherine West:**[\[67222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to COP26, whether a decision has been made on the potential development of the Cambo oil field.

**Greg Hands:**

The Cambo oil field was first licensed in 2001. Development proposals for fields with existing licences, such as Cambo, are subject to a rigorous scrutiny process prior to consent by the independent Oil and Gas Authority, as well as an environmental impact assessment and a public consultation by the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning. No decision has yet been taken on the Cambo project.

**Sam Tarry:**[\[67306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) short- and (b) long-term jobs that would be created by the Cambo oil field development.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government does not forecast estimates of the numbers of jobs associated with particular oil field developments as a matter of course, and this does not form part of the regulator's decision-making processes.

The upstream oil and gas sector supports approximately 147,000 jobs both directly and in the supply chain. Many of these roles are highly skilled, providing quality employment for workers in locations right across the country and supporting many more local jobs.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[68403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential environmental impact of the

Cambo Oil Field on (a) the surrounding wildlife, (b) achieving net zero emission by 2050 and (c) global temperatures.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Cambo oil field was first licensed in 2001. Development proposals for fields with existing licences, such as Cambo, are subject to a rigorous scrutiny process prior to consent by the independent Oil and Gas Authority, as well as an environmental impact assessment and a public consultation by the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning. Any assessment of the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project is in accordance with the Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020. No decision has yet been taken on the Cambo project.

■ **Pension Funds: Environment Protection**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[67226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) reduce barriers to investment and (b) encourage pension funds to invest in the green economy.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 4 November 2021]:* The UK financial services industry, with their access to global capital pools and outstanding professional services, are poised to enable private capital to flow into our net zero investment needs. As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, we are colloquial instead, ensuring more disclosure and transparency in the financial markets on climate risks through new Sustainability Disclosure Requirements.

At the same time, targeted public intervention via the British Business Bank (BBB), UK Export Finance and the UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) coupled with strong policy frameworks, will bring down the cost of capital and will bring investment from the private sector.

The Government has been a global champion in promoting safer, better, greener pensions. On 1 October 2021, Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures regulations and statutory guidance came into force, requiring trustees to consider, assess and report on the financial risks and opportunities of climate change within their portfolios.

■ **Renewable Energy**

**Mark Jenkinson:**

[\[67263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of Ofgem's Access and Forward-looking Charges Significant Code Review.

**Mark Jenkinson:**

**[67264]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment (a) of the potential effect of Ofgem's Access and Forward-looking Charges Significant Code Review on the timetable for investment in renewable generation in the North West as a result of the creation of uncertainty in charging for connections over 1MW and (b) of the potential for that review to be frustrated in its objectives by key pinch points on the National Grid.

**Greg Hands:**

Ofgem has recently consulted on three areas of reform through its Access and Forward-looking Charges Review. First, it is proposing to reduce or remove the contribution to distribution network reinforcement costs paid by connecting customers. This would support the roll-out of low carbon technologies, including by further incentivising network companies to ensure that new connections can be accommodated on the network. Second, Ofgem is proposing to improve the definition and choice of rights that users have to access the distribution network, with the aim of supporting more efficient use and development of network capacity. Third, Ofgem is minded to remove a difference in charging arrangements between large and small generators, by extending transmission charges to small distributed generation.

Ofgem has published a draft impact assessment to support its proposals, which includes consideration of implications for investment decisions and constraint management. It is available at <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/access-and-forward-looking-charges-significant-code-review-consultation-minded-positions>. My Department is continuing to engage as Ofgem progresses the review, to understand how any decisions can help support delivery of a secure, net zero energy system at lowest cost to consumers.

## ■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Employment and Support Allowance

**Hywel Williams:**

**[68125]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons contribution based employment and support allowance is not included in the eligibility criteria for the Warm Homes Discount.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:*

It is the responsibility of each participating energy supplier to administer their Warm Home Discount Broader Group rebates and pay the rebates to their eligible customers. Whilst there are minimum standard criteria set out in the Regulations that energy suppliers must include, suppliers can set their own criteria for Broader Group rebates. Each energy supplier's additional Broader Group criteria must be targeted towards consumers in fuel poverty or at risk of fuel poverty and must be approved by Ofgem each scheme year.

Typically, the Broader Group eligibility criteria focus on receipt of means-tested benefits alongside indicators of vulnerability, such as a disability premium or parental

responsibility for a child under the age of 5. Some energy suppliers do consider contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance as part of their eligibility criteria.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Brexit

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[68448\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the progress in implementing the commitments set out in the Joint Report agreed between the EU and the UK in December 2017.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Government's July [Command Paper](#) set out the Joint Report's influence on the negotiation framework of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, specifically its flawed contribution to the 'Northern Ireland Backstop', an agreement which Parliament subsequently refused to approve.

The foundation of our approach is the protection of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the need for a new balance in the arrangements covering the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol to ensure they are sustainable and have support from all communities. We continue to engage in regular technical talks with the EU about implementation of this Protocol, as well as all other aspects of the Withdrawal Agreement.

## DEFENCE

### ■ External Scrutiny Team: Annual Reports

**James Gray:**

[\[67053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2021 to Question 48135 on Reserve Forces, whether he plans to publish the 2021 annual report produced by the Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team before its author, Major General Simon Lalor, addresses the APPG for Armed Forces on Monday 8 December 2021.

**James Heappey:**

We anticipate the report should be placed in the Library of the House prior to 8 December 2021.

### ■ Land Use: Hunting

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[69174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the merits of prohibiting trail hunting on land owned by his Department to prevent its use as a cover for

illegal hunting, following the judgment in the case of R v Mark Hankinson; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

Trail and drag hunting on the Defence estate remain legal activities providing they are carried out within the provisions of the Hunting Act 2004. A range of people and activities are allowed access to the MOD estate subject to appropriate controls.

■ **Military Aid: Ambulance Services**

**David Linden:** [\[69677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of deploying of military personnel to assist the Welsh Ambulance Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heappey:**

Since 22 March 2020, the estimated cost of assisting the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust in support of Op RESCRIPT (MOD's COVID-19 response) is £2.7 million.

■ **Military Aid: East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust**

**David Linden:** [\[69682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of deploying of military personnel to assist the East of England Ambulance Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heappey:**

Since 22 March 2020 the estimated cost of assisting East of England Ambulance Service in support of Op RESCRIPT (MOD's COVID-19 response) is £20,000k.

■ **Military Aid: North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust**

**David Linden:** [\[69681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of deploying of military personnel to assist the North East Ambulance Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heappey:**

Since 22 March 2020 the estimated cost of assisting North East Coast Ambulance Service in support of Op RESCRIPT (MoD's COVID-19 response) is £0. This does not mean that no support was given to North East Coast Ambulance Service by the Ministry of Defence, but if it was provided it was at a national instead of regional level.

■ **Military Aid: South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust**

**David Linden:** [\[69678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of deploying of military personnel to assist the South Central Ambulance Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heappey:**

Since 22 March 2020, the estimated cost of assisting South Central Ambulance Service Trust in support of Op RESCRIPT (MOD's COVID-19 response) is £751,000k

**David Linden:**[\[69679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of deploying of military personnel to assist the South Western Ambulance Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

**David Linden:**[\[69680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of deploying of military personnel to assist the South Western Ambulance Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heappey:**

Since 22 March 2020, the estimated cost of assisting South Western Ambulance Service in support of Op RESCRIPT (MOD's COVID-19 response) is £72,000.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Fines****John Healey:**[\[68119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to page 108 of his Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2013 to 2014 and page 172 of his Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2014 to 2015, if for what reasons his Department was fined (a) £31.6 million and (b) £1 million by HM Treasury.

**Jeremy Quin:**

ARAc 2013-14 - £31.6 million Fine from HMT

There were no fines of this value reported in the MOD ARAc 2013-2014 publication. A fine of this amount however was reported in the MOD ARAc for 2015-16 and it is this entry that we assume is being referenced in the question.

This fine related to instances where the Department had not appropriately sought nor gained necessary approval from HM-Treasury prior to the placement of some contracts. As a result of this procedural failure, HM Treasury imposed a £31.6million fine upon the Department. The Department undertook extensive action to address the procedural weaknesses, no further fines of this nature have been imposed upon Defence in the subsequent years.

ARAc 2014-15 - £1 million Fine from HMT

This HM Treasury fine was imposed for failures by the Department to seek assurance from a number of high-paid off-payroll appointees that they were paying the correct tax and National Insurance. This relates to procedural failures to seek assurance as part of the onboarding process for off-payroll staff to confirm the arrangements in place for those individuals to pay income tax and national insurance. The Department has implemented revised processes for the management of off-payroll employees



including the new responsibilities placed on employers by changes to IR35 legislation. As a result, no further fines of this type have been imposed since.

■ **Ministry Of Defence: Ivory**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[69188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of ivory items in the possession of his Department.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Ministry of Defence has not made any estimates of the number of ivory items owned by or collated by the Department or institutions owned or managed by the Government.

■ **National Flagship: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[69018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the construction of the National Flagship will (a) be funded from the defence budget and (b) affect other defence capabilities.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The capital cost of building the National Flagship will fall to the defence budget as part of the Government's wider commitment to the UK shipbuilding industry. The through-life costs will be addressed at the next Spending Review. The build cost is expected to be about 0.1% of the defence budget over the next four years and will be brought into our spending plans in the 2022 annual budget cycle.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Channel Four Television: Greater Manchester**

**Mark Logan:** [\[69214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will take steps to ensure Channel 4's current regional distribution of offices and headcount across Greater Manchester is maintained and that a potential expansion to Bolton is supported, in the event that Channel 4 is privatised.

**Julia Lopez:**

Channel 4's strengths in the regions and nations are to be celebrated and maintained into its future, and that is not at odds with private investment - Channel 4's access to networks out of London 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 ran for 10 weeks before closing on 14 September. We



are carefully considering the views and evidence we have received to inform the government's policy-making and final decision.

## ■ Internet: Safety

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[68250]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will set out a timeline for the Online Safety Bill; and whether that timeline will allow for the outcomes of the Government's public consultation on banning conversion therapy practices to inform the Bill.

**Chris Philp:**

Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Bill by Parliament is underway, and we expect the Joint Committee to report with their recommendations by 10 December.

The Bill remains a priority for DCMS and the Home Office, and we will introduce the Bill as soon as possible after we have considered the recommendations made by the Joint Committee.

The conversion therapy consultation is open until 10 December. The government will then publish its response to the consultation in the new year. Legislation to ban conversion therapy is being prepared for Spring 2022.

The government is considering how best to tackle the promotion of conversion therapy online through the Online Safety Bill and associated work.

## ■ Social Media: Children

**John Nicolson:**

**[68325]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she will take to evaluate the adequacy of social media companies' risk assessments of the likelihood of children using their adult services.

**Chris Philp:**

The strongest protections in the draft Online Safety Bill are for children. The Bill will require social media companies to assess whether their service is likely to be accessed by or appeal to a significant number of children and, if so, deliver additional protections for them.

Ofcom will be required to produce and publish guidance for services on how to undertake this risk assessment. Companies which assess that they are not likely to be accessed by children will need to provide robust evidence to the regulator and keep this assessment under review. The requirement to undertake, and keep up to date, an accurate assessment with regard to child access is an enforceable requirement. Ofcom may take enforcement action where providers do not carry out an adequate assessment and keep it up to date.

## ■ Software: Children

**John Nicolson:**

[\[68326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to prevent children accessing adult applications on tablets and phones.

**Chris Philp:**

The strongest protections within the draft Online Safety Bill are for children. Services which are likely to be accessed by or attract a significant number of children will be required to conduct a child safety risk assessment and provide safety measures for child users. This includes services which are not targeted at children, but which they are accessing.

Ofcom will set out the steps companies can take to protect children from harm on their service. Companies will have to ensure that only users who are old enough are able to access services which have age restrictions or risk causing them harm. We expect companies to use age verification technologies to prevent children from accessing services which pose the highest risk of harm to children, such as online pornography or dating sites.

## ■ Sports: LGBT People

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[68251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to support LGBTQ+ inclusion in British sport.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The government is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, which is at the heart of our strategy 'Sporting Future'. Our aim is to help the sport sector be more inclusive and welcoming to its spectators, participants and workforce, including LGBTQ+ people.

Sport England, our arm's length body for grassroots sport in England, launched their new ten year strategy Uniting the Movement (UoM) in January 2021. As part of that, they held a number of focus groups and interviews to ensure LGBTQ+ people are given as many opportunities and as much support to get active as people with other protected characteristics. These efforts include a combination of research, insight, and funding for specific LGBTQ+ projects and organisations. The Sport England's Active Lives Survey also captures data on LGBTQ+ people's physical activity levels biannually.

Additionally, as part of the forthcoming update for the Code of Sport Governance, sports receiving the most funding will be required to agree a diversity and inclusion action plan with Sport England and UK Sport, which will be published and updated annually. This will further support LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport across the nation.

We will continue to work closely with our arm's length bodies, sports national governing bodies, and sector partners, to ensure inclusion for LGBTQ+ people is present at grassroots sport all the way through to elite sport.

### ■ Third Sector: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[67196]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the increased funding to her Department announced in the Budget 2021, how much and what proportion of that additional funding she plans to allocate to civil society organisations; and what percentage change that will represent compared with 2020.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

DCMS has secured a Spending Review settlement that will enable us to deliver the Prime Minister's priorities and Manifesto commitments for which we are responsible.

This is a positive overall settlement for DCMS and our ALBs. As always, we need now to work through the detail of what it means for individual organisations, programmes and teams before providing more detailed allocations.

We will of course continue to work with all stakeholders on the implementation of our programmes so that we can deliver our ambitious agenda.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Archaeology: Education

**Rachael Maskell:**

[67204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the economic impact on York of reductions in funding for archaeology courses.

**Michelle Donelan:**

In January 2021 we asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the Strategic Priorities Grant. In considering consultation responses and the issues that were highlighted the Secretary of State for Education concluded that archaeology should be included within the OfS's Price Group C1.1 subject list. Therefore, government funding for archaeology from the Strategic Priorities Grant has not been reduced. In academic year 2020/21, archaeology was in the OfS' Price Group C1 for high-cost subject funding and received £243 per full-time equivalent student. In academic year 2021/22 archaeology was included in the OfS' Price Group C1.1 subject list and received an increased high-cost subject funding rate of £252.50 per full-time equivalent student, as set out here:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/recurrent-funding-for-2021-22-outcomes-of-consultation/>.

## ■ Day Care and Social Services: Finance

**Gill Furniss:**

**[69163]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made on the adequacy of funding for childcare and social care services to meet the increase in public sector pay and the National Living Wage.

**Will Quince:**

The Department for Education has spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past three years on our early education entitlements and the government will continue to support families with their childcare costs.

At the Spending Review on 27 October, it was announced that the department is investing additional funding for the early years entitlements worth £160 million in the 2022-23 financial year, £180 million in the 2023-24 financial year and £170 million in 2024-25 financial year, compared to the current year. This is for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers and reflects the costs of inflation and national living wage increases.

Local authorities spent over £10 billion on children and young people's services in the 2019-20 financial year. Local authorities fund their services, including those for children, from their core spending power and this year councils have access to £51.3 billion for their services, including a £1.7 billion grant for social care.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that government will provide local authorities with £4.8 billion of new grant funding over the next Spending Review period, which is intended to help meet the costs of delivering care for our most vulnerable children. This will enable the sector to maintain vital frontline services, including children's services workforce, in light of additional pressures including inflation.

## ■ Education: Finance

**Henry Smith:**

**[68208]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £1.8 billion in education recovery funding, announced at the Spending Review on 27 October 2021, will be used to fund catch-up health and care services for (a) disabled and (b) other young people.

**Will Quince:**

Health services are accessed through the NHS and not funded by the Department for Education. Local authorities are responsible for providing respite care and short breaks for disabled children, these services are funded through the main local government settlement.

Helping children and young people to catch up on education missed due to the COVID-19 outbreak remains a top priority of this government. Our £1.8 billion investment announced as part of the Spending Review is targeted at those who most

need help catching up. It includes over £800 million to provide a universal uplift with an additional 40 hours of education for students aged 16-19 who have the least time left to recover; and an additional £1 billion of catch up funding directly to schools so they can best decide how to support education recovery for the pupils that need it, focused on evidence-based approaches.

The department has consistently prioritised children with SEND in our recovery programmes, for example by providing additional uplifts for those who attend specialist education providers (including SEND units in mainstream schools) in both the catch-up premium in the 2020/21 academic year and the recovery premium for the 2021/22 academic year, and providing additional funding to special and alternative provision schools to provide one to one tutoring for their pupils, with greater flexibility to schools to make it easier for them to take on local tutors or use existing staff to supplement those employed through the existing National Tutoring Programme. The 16-19 tuition fund continues to support students with SEND as at present through small group tuition.

The department is providing over £42 million in the 2021-22 financial year to continue funding projects to support children with SEND. This investment will ensure that specialist organisations around the country can continue to help strengthen local area performance, support families and provide practical support to schools and colleges. It will strengthen participation of parents and young people in the SEND system, ensuring they have a voice in designing policies and services and have access to high quality information and support.

Alongside recovery funding, the department is investing £2.6 billion between the financial years 2022 and 2025 to deliver new places and improve existing provision for pupils with SEND or who require alternative provision. This funding represents a significant, transformational investment in new high needs provision and will help deliver tens of thousands of new places.

More widely, the department has continued to provide local authorities with their full high needs revenue funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, including more than £1.5 billion of high needs funding over financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22, bringing the total high needs funding allocated this year to more than £8 billion. The department announced in summer 2021 that high needs funding will increase by a further £780 million, or 9.6%, in the next financial year, compared to this year. Through the Spending Review the department secured for schools and children and young people with high needs an increase of £4.7 billion by financial year 2024-25, compared to our original 2022-23 plans. This includes £1.6 billion in additional funding for 2022-23 budgets, on top of the year-on-year increase of £2.4 billion already confirmed at the 2019 Spending Review, and which is intended to help the sector respond to the pressures the department knows they are seeing: in overall costs, in national insurance, on high needs, in managing COVID-19 and in supporting children and young people to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak. The department will confirm in due course how this funding will be allocated in 2022-23 for schools and high needs.

## ■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Training

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[69206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent progress he has made on launching skills boot camps to train new heavy goods vehicle drivers.

**Alex Burghart:**

To help address the shortage of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers across the country, the government is investing up to £17 million to deliver new Skills Bootcamps to help up to 5,000 adults train in HGV drivers.

The department launched an invitation to tender on 8 October, inviting applications to deliver Skills Bootcamps for individuals who are new to HGV driving, for those that have left the industry and wish to return, and existing HGV drivers who need additional qualifications to work in high priority areas like driving fuel tankers. The tender closed on 22 October. The department is currently reviewing and evaluating the bids received, with providers awarded funding set to start delivery later this year.

## ■ New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering

**Jesse Norman:**

[\[68225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of adopting the NMITE skills-based educational model for levelling up in the UK.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government is clear that all higher education (HE) providers have the potential to deliver on the government's levelling up agenda, addressing the gaps that still exist in who participates in HE, whether by social background, region, or ethnicity and to deliver provision that much better delivers the skills the economy needs. Higher skills lead to higher regional productivity.

There are many different models through which HE providers deliver the skills their regional economies need. The New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering has much potential but is still a new provider. The government will remain closely interested in the outcomes it delivers for its students.

The department published the 'Skills for Jobs' white paper in January 2021, setting out our blueprint to reform post-16 education and training, focusing on giving people the skills they need in a way that suits them.

The white paper sets out that we are putting employers at the heart of the skills system so that education and training meets their needs. By 2030, almost all technical courses will be on employer-led standards, ensuring that the education and training people receive are directly linked to the skills needed for jobs. This builds on the success of our flagship apprenticeships programme where industry designed standards equip apprentices with the skills employers need. It also builds on our work developing new T Levels, which has involved over 250 employers in their design.

## ■ Religion: Education

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[69704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions officials in his Department have held with representatives of teachers of religious education regarding the value offered in terms of skills for young people by that subject; and if he will make a statement.

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[69705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the value offered in terms of skills for young people by the subject matter of religious education; and if he will make a statement.

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[69706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the societal value for young people of religious education; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The government firmly believes that religious education (RE) is important. Good quality RE is essential in developing children's knowledge of British values and traditions, and those of other countries. RE is a vital part of fostering understanding among different faiths and beliefs, which is why it is a compulsory subject for all state-funded schools up to the age of 18.

Department officials engage regularly with key RE stakeholders, including the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education as the main subject association for RE in England.

When teaching RE, schools should consider how their curriculum can develop social skills and empathy, as well as equip children and young people with the skills for living and working in a diverse society. For older pupils, RE should also focus on developing skills that are useful in a wide range of careers and adult life, and in particular the skills of critical enquiry, creative problem-solving and communication in a variety of media.

In school life, RE can develop and nuance the skills required for other parts of the school curriculum such as history, citizenship, and personal, social, health and economic education.

RE is an important subject, developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society, as well as serving to inform their own values and behaviour. RE can also contribute to pupils' personal development and well-being by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society. It is an important contributor to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, which schools are required to facilitate as per the Education Act 2002.



Studying RE can also serve to improve community cohesion, providing a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.

## ■ Respite Care: Coronavirus

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[69067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities over the use of the £4.8 billion additional grant funding for local authorities, announced at the Spending Review on 27 October 2021, to help ensure that the short breaks and respite care that families with disabled children have may missed during outbreak of covid-19 are restored.

**Will Quince:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and the Department for Education, discuss and work with other government departments on a regular basis, including with my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities, on a range of issues, including local government funding and services.

## ■ Schools: Admissions

**Judith Cummins:**

[\[69625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the sufficiency of school places for children with high functioning autism.

**Judith Cummins:**

[\[69626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many supported placements exist nationally for children with high functioning autism.

**Will Quince:**

The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places sits with local authorities. This includes places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), such as those with high functioning autism. We are supporting local authorities to meet this duty by investing £300 million in the 2021-22 financial year to support local authorities to deliver places and improve existing provision for pupils with SEND, or who require alternative provision.

The department will also be investing a further £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to deliver new places and improve existing provision for pupils with SEND, or who require alternative provision. This funding represents a transformational investment in new high needs provision and will help deliver tens of thousands of new high needs places. Details of how this funding will be distributed will be announced in due course.

Local authorities are best placed to say how many places are available in their area for pupils with high functioning autism. The government does not currently collect data centrally on available capacity in high needs provision but is continuing to work



with local authorities to better understand demand for SEND provision, including for children with autism, as it considers how it can best support the sector going forwards.

The SEND Review is also looking at ways to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high quality, and integrated across education, health and care. It is also considering measures to make sure that money is being spent fairly, efficiently and effectively, and that the support available to children and young people is sustainable in the future, including for those with autism.

## ■ Schools: Carbon Emissions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[68358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating funding for the building of new schools to replace those with high carbon emissions.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

In June 2020, the government announced the new School Rebuilding Programme. The department has confirmed the first 100 schools as part of a commitment to 500 rebuilding and refurbishment projects over the next decade. The programme will replace poor condition and ageing school buildings with modern, energy efficient designs, delivering new buildings that will be net zero carbon in operation, and more resilient to future climate change.

The department's consultation on the approach to prioritising schools for future places in the programme closed on 8 October 2021 and we plan to set out further details in early 2022.

The department also allocates capital funding each year to those responsible for school buildings to improve and maintain the condition of the school estate. Condition funding can be used to invest in improving energy efficiency.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy set up the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in 2020 to provide grants for eligible public sector bodies, including schools, to fund energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation measures.

## ■ Schools: Discipline

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[68489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the use of isolation booths on the mental health of young people in school.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

In June 2021, the department launched a call for evidence on managing behaviour and the use of isolation rooms in schools, including asking how vulnerable pupils are supported. This evidence will be considered and further assessed alongside the results of a public consultation later this year on the 'behaviour and discipline in schools' guidance. The guidance will provide practical advice to schools about how to

encourage good behaviour and respond effectively to incidents of misbehaviour in and out of the classroom.

Our 'mental health and behaviour in schools' guidance includes specific information about supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and can assist schools with their own assessment of the interaction between behavioural issues, management and mental health. This guidance is available at:

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

## ■ Skilled Workers: Training

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[67202]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the Government's skills strategy prioritises training and courses that meet the workforce demands for the future.

**Alex Burghart:**

The department published the 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper in January 2021, setting out our blueprint to reform post-16 education and training, focusing on giving people the skills they need in a way that suits them.

The white paper sets out that we are putting employers at the heart of the skills system so that education and training meets their needs. By 2030, almost all technical courses will be on employer-led standards, ensuring that the education and training people receive are directly linked to the skills needed for jobs. This builds on the success of our flagship apprenticeships programme where industry designed standards equip apprentices with the skills employers need and our work on developing new T Levels, which has involved over 250 employers in their design.

It also set out our aim to give employers a central role working with further education colleges, other providers and local stakeholders to develop new Local Skills Improvement Plans as part of the Skills Accelerator, which shape technical skills provision so that it meets local labour market skills needs. These will be launched in a number of trailblazer areas and be led by accredited Chambers of Commerce and other employer representative bodies in collaboration with local providers. We will engage employer and provider groups to ensure we create the most effective models of employer representation before wider rollout.

Following the Wolf Review which found that the content of many qualifications was not valued by employers, the department is streamlining and improving the quality of the post-16 level 3 system. We are strengthening the pathways to progression, creating clearly defined academic and technical routes with qualifications leading to further study, and/or skilled employment. Our proposed landscape – with employers at the heart and a much greater focus on quality – will serve all students better.

We announced in the recent Spending Review that we are investing £3.8 billion in further education and skills, to ensure people can access high-quality training and education that leads to good jobs, addresses current and future skills gaps, boosts

productivity, and supports levelling up. This builds on the range of skills policies that we have introduced to improve skills at all levels.

The introduction of T Levels will boost access to high quality technical education for thousands of 16 to 19 year olds, representing a once in a lifetime opportunity to reform technical education in this country, put it on a par with the best in the world and offer young people a real choice of high-quality training that is equal in esteem to traditional academic routes.

We are providing an extra £1.6 billion boost for 16 to 19 year old's education, including maintaining funding in real terms per student and delivering more hours of teaching for T Levels.

We are committed to supporting more people to benefit from the high-quality training that apprenticeships offer, including those at the start of their career or those looking to retrain, and as my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, set out at the Spending Review, funding for apprenticeships will grow to £2.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year, delivering the first increase to employer-led apprenticeships funding since the 2019/20 financial year. We are also investing over £550 million by the 2024/25 financial year to make sure adults can upskill to reach their potential, delivering on the National Skills Fund commitment.

Many people lack the basic numeracy skills they need and that is why we have introduced 'Multiply', a new £560 million programme to help people improve their basic numeracy skills through free digital training, flexible courses, and tutoring. Launching in spring 2022, the Multiply programme is in addition to the England-wide statutory entitlement for numeracy and will give people who do not have at least a GCSE grade C/4 or equivalent in mathematics access to free, new and flexible courses to improve their maths skills. This will include a new website with bitesize training and online tutorials, as well as flexible courses.

## ■ Trade Unions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential role of trade unions in driving up skills in the workplace.

**Alex Burghart:**

The department works with a range of stakeholders as it develops its policies. It consults widely and its public consultations are open to all interested parties. We have recently consulted on reforms to further education funding and accountability, the National Skills Fund, flexi job apprenticeships and review of qualifications. Public consultations enable the department to gather a range of views, input and evidence as it develops its policies. Trade unions are free to respond to our consultations and their views would be welcome.

As part of our work on being committed to playing our part to support the labour market transition to net zero, in November last year, we established (jointly with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) the Green Jobs Taskforce,

which has helped to build the evidence on skills and workforce needs in key green sectors. The Trade Union Congress and Prospect were members of the Green Jobs Taskforce. That has informed our contribution to the Net Zero Strategy which was published on 19 October 2021. Building on the Skills for Jobs White Paper, the Net Zero Strategy sets out how our skills reforms will strengthen links between employers and providers, support workers in high carbon sectors with the transition, and help to build a pipeline of future talent.

This will build on our existing range of skills policies that we have introduced to improve skills at all levels.

The introduction of T Levels will boost access to high quality technical education for thousands of 16-19 year olds and we are providing an extra £1.6 billion boost for 16-19 year olds' education including maintaining funding in real terms per student and delivering more hours of teaching for T Levels.

We are continuing with our commitment to supporting more people to benefit from the high-quality training that apprenticeships offer by increasing funding for apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024-25.

We are also investing over £550 million by 2024-25 to make sure adults can upskill to reach their potential, delivering on the National Skills Fund commitment. This includes expanding level 3 course offer in high value, high demand subjects and scaling up skills bootcamps.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

**Layla Moran:**

[\[69685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2021 to Question 59130, on Nature Conservation, when badger culls will be included in the Government's bovine tuberculosis eradication strategy in the event that epidemiological evidence points to a reservoir of disease in badgers.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are still developing our future policy of badger culling where epidemiological evidence points to a reservoir of disease in badgers. Once the policy has been developed further, we intend to consult on the proposals.

### ■ Cats and Dogs: Imports

**Dr Neil Hudson:**

[\[67313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to raise to six months the minimum age for cats and dogs to be transported into the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 8 June with second reading on 25 October. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and on the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. This included a proposal to raise the minimum age dogs can be non-commercially or commercially imported into Great Britain from 15 weeks to six months. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary response in due course. We will take into account the views of the public and will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure that our final measures are well considered and are guided by the latest evidence.

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Ministerial Responsibility****Ruth Jones:**[\[67253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021, how many departmental meetings the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in his Department, the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds, has attended since 17 September 2021.

**Ruth Jones:**[\[67254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 59956, on Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Ministerial Responsibility, which policy areas the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in his Department, the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds, has covered in meetings at the Department.

**Ruth Jones:**[\[67255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 59956, on Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Ministerial Responsibility, whether the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in his Department, the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds, is a paid member of the Government.

**George Eustice:**

The ministerial responsibilities of the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds have been published on gov.uk. External meetings will be published in the usual way on the transparency data publications, available on gov.uk in due course.

I can confirm the hon. Member for Bury St Edmonds is a paid member of the Government.

**■ Dogs: Animal Breeding**

**Dr Neil Hudson:** [67314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the presence of puppy farming in the UK.

**Dr Neil Hudson:** [67315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle puppy farming in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing the licence requirements for animal related activities such as pet selling or dog breeding. They therefore hold details of the enforcement activity being undertaken in their area, including information relating to low-welfare and illegal breeding activity. This Government takes the issue of low-welfare and illegal supply of puppies very seriously. Significant steps have already been taken to improve and update the laws on dog breeding in England to crack down on unscrupulous breeders who breed dogs purely for financial greed at the expense of animal welfare.

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 Regulations) anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs and/or who breeds three or more litters in a twelve-month period needs to have a valid licence from their local authority. Licensees must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards, including provisions to protect dogs from being bred from too often or at an early age, which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue, refuse or revoke licences. Any licensee advertising dogs for sale will need to include their licence number in the advert and specify the local authority who issued the licence. Additional requirements placed on advertisements include that the age of the dog for sale must be displayed along with a recognisable photograph.

We banned the commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens in England from 6 April 2020. This ban aims to disrupt the low-welfare trade that supports puppy farming by preventing pet shops, pet dealers and other commercial outlets from selling these animals in England unless they themselves have bred them. It means anyone looking to get a puppy must buy direct from a breeder or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead.

Meanwhile my department maintains a national communications campaign (Petfished) to raise awareness of issues associated with low-welfare and illegal supply of pets. This includes providing clear signposting to where responsible breeders and rehoming centres can be found and encouraging prospective buyers to research the seller thoroughly before they visit and decide to purchase. The campaign provides a list of red flags for buyers to look out for when searching for a pet online. More information can be found here:

<https://getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk> (opens in a new tab).

We have also endorsed The Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG), which was created to combat growing concerns about the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale, rehoming and exchange, and backed a set of minimum standards that PAAG developed, which several of the UK's largest classified websites have agreed to meet.

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 8 June. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and on the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

The Government launched a consultation on 21 August on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain, including our proposal to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement of puppies under the age of six months into Great Britain. We will take into account the views of the public and will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure that our final measures are well considered and are guided by the latest evidence.

## ■ Export Health Certificates

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[62666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of number of annual Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) documents, including export health certificates, phytosanitary certificates and catch certificates, that will be required for (a) exports from Great Britain to the EU and (b) imports from Great Britain to the EU once full border controls have been implemented.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[62669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of number of annual sanitary and phytosanitary checks in all forms that will be conducted for (a) exports from Great Britain to the EU and (b) imports from Great Britain to the EU once full border controls have been implemented.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Full import controls on GB exports to the EU have been in operation by the EU since 1 January 2021. The number of export health certificates being issued will not change as a result of our own implementation of border checks on EU imports into GB.

Estimates of the total number of export health certificates required following the end of the transition period indicated that up to 300k additional certificates would be needed for GB-EU trade, and up to 480k per annum when GB-NI and GB-Rest of World Trade were included. The EU determines how many physical checks it needs to conduct with minimum levels set out in the Official Controls Regulation. Regulated imports and exports are subject to 100% documentary checks.

We estimate, based on our own analysis of customs data, that 4 million to 5.9 million consignments of sanitary and phytosanitary commodities will be imported annually



from the EU. These are divided between 1.3 million to 2.5 million consignments of products of animal origin, and 2.7 million to 3.4 million consignments of plants and plant products. Each individual consignment will require certification. A minimum 1% of all low-risk imports will be physically checked with higher percentages for commodities that present a greater biosecurity risk.

## ■ Farmers: Health

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[66264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of (a) current and (b) emerging health and wellbeing challenges experienced by farming communities.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We have built strong partnerships with Farm Welfare charities & support groups to exchange information and aid understanding of the current issues and challenges around health and wellbeing. We recently collaborated with the RABl on their Big Farming Survey, the results of which were launched at an event on 14 October. The findings from that survey align with our wider understanding drawn from our evolving evidence base where we know that a complex mix of factors influence mental health and wellbeing in the farming community. The RABl report highlights both stress drivers and opportunities and all these points are similarly represented in our existing evidence. Personal wellbeing is linked to business reliance, as well as regulations and changes in policies and within our Future Farming and Countryside Programme we are committed to supporting business opportunities as well as deliver new schemes in a way that can strengthen wellbeing.

## ■ Fungi: Plastics

**Catherine West:**

[\[67224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the research report entitled State of the World's Fungi 2018, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the findings of that research that waste plastic broken down by fungi may be used to create sustainable building materials.

**Jo Churchill:**

Defra is strongly committed to reducing the environmental harm caused by plastics. While we have not made a formal assessment of this particular piece of research, the Government has put together a package of over £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from waste plastics.



## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Rivers

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[67275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of construction work related to HS2 on England's chalk streams.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA) has given approval to High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd to complete a number of construction activities in the Chilterns (including tunnelling) under Schedule 33 of the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017.

The EA determines applications on a technical basis using information and data to inform judgements. This process ensures that the applicant has identified and assessed any potential impacts on the water environment and ecology along the route of HS2. Any approval issued must contain appropriate conditions to protect against these impacts.

HS2 Ltd has been doing baseline monitoring of ground and surface water along the route of HS2 since 2017. This data supplements the long-term monitoring done by the EA and its contractors. HS2 monitoring will continue during and post-construction.

The EA will continue to work with HS2 Ltd and its contractors to ensure they comply with the approval conditions and that all risks to the environment continue to be minimised. The EA has regulatory powers of enforcement to use if necessary.

## ■ Pets: Imports

**Dr Neil Hudson:**

[\[67310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to improve animal welfare and biosecurity following the consultation on Commercial and Non-Commercial Movement of Pets into Great Britain.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 8 June with second reading on 25 October. The Bill allows us to protect the welfare of pets by introducing restrictions to crack down on the low welfare movements of pets into Great Britain and includes powers to introduce new restrictions on pet travel and the commercial import of pets on welfare grounds, via secondary legislation.

In August 2021, the Government launched an eight-week consultation on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets into Great Britain. This included proposals to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement into Great Britain of puppies under the age of six months, heavily pregnant dogs and dogs which have been subjected to low welfare practices such as ear cropping or tail docking. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a summary response in due course. This will allow us to take onboard the views of the public and interested groups on puppy smuggling and low welfare imports in order to shape our future policy.

Defra has no immediate plans to change the animal health requirements for pets entering Great Britain. Defra continues to monitor the disease situation carefully and our future policy will be guided by risk assessment.

### ■ Rabies: Vaccination

**Dr Neil Hudson:**

[\[67312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to introduce a 12 week wait period post rabies vaccination for small animals entering the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government launched a consultation on 21 August on our proposed restrictions to the commercial and non-commercial movement of pets (cats, dogs and ferrets) into Great Britain, including our proposal to ban the commercial and non-commercial movement of puppies under the age of six months into Great Britain. We will take into account the views of the public and will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure that our final measures are well considered and are guided by the latest evidence.

Defra has no immediate plans to change the import health requirements in relation to rabies for pets entering Great Britain. Recent quantitative risk assessments have concluded that the risk of a pet animal with rabies entering the UK under the pet travel rules is very low. Defra continues to monitor the disease situation carefully and our future policy will be guided by risk assessment.

### ■ River Wye: Pollution

**Jesse Norman:**

[\[68224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made on allocating funding to tackle pollution in the river Wye.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Wye catchment area is internationally important for biodiversity, principally due to the wide range of rare river wildlife. It is vitally important that we achieve the right balance to allow sustainable development to continue and to protect our most important natural habitats.

In the recently-announced Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, Defra has been allocated an additional £250 million to deliver against the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan for nature's recovery and the new legally-binding target to halt biodiversity loss by 2030. This specifically includes tackling nutrient pollution in rivers and streams.

We are almost doubling funding for the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme. This additional £17 million will allow all farms in England, including those in the Wye catchment, access to free 1-2-1 advice and support farmers to help them reduce water and air pollution through management of farmyard manure and soils, among other things.

We have also recently increased funding to the Environment Agency for 50 new farm inspectors. These will be targeted at high-risk catchments such as the Wye.

As well as Government funding, we are also looking to other investment routes to improve the state of our rivers and the surrounding environment. The water sector is investing £5.4 billion to protect the environment between 2020 and 2025 and we have set a stretching new target to raise at least £500 million in private finance for nature's recovery every year by 2027 and more than £1 billion a year by 2030.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Bangladesh: Hinduism

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[69634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with representatives of (a) human rights organisations operating in Bangladesh and (b) non-governmental organisations in receipt of funding from her Department in that country on reported attacks on Hindu minority households and temples in Bangladesh during and after the Durga Puja religious festival.

**Amanda Milling:**

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

### ■ Bangladesh: Religious Freedom

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[69636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support her Department is providing to (a) human rights organisations and (b) other non-governmental organisations in Bangladesh working to end religious and ethnic violence in that country.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities.

Bangladesh is a human rights priority country for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Ministers and our High Commission in Dhaka regularly

raise human rights concerns as part of continued dialogue with the Government of Bangladesh. The UK supports community leaders in Bangladesh to address the causes and effects of inter-religious, ethnic and political conflict. Through our development programming, we aim to ensure that the rights of minorities including, religious and ethnic minorities, are respected and that these communities are protected from discrimination. For example, our programming supports citizen groups across Bangladesh to come together to resolve grievances, mitigate religious and ethnic violence and advocate for inclusive and peaceful co-existence.

## ■ China: Taiwan

**Andrew Percy:** [\[68202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the recent tensions between China and Taiwan.

**Amanda Milling:**

Her Majesty's Government considers the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue. We are concerned by any activity which raises tensions and risks destabilising the status quo and have been clear that the numerous Chinese military flights near Taiwan at the beginning of October were not conducive to peace and stability in the region. We underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait alongside partners in the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' communique in May and G7 Leaders' communique in June.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Layla Moran:** [\[69688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government's press release of 30 October 2021, UK donates 20 million more Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines to countries in need, whether the 10 million additional COVID-19 vaccine doses due to be delivered to some of the world's most vulnerable people will be donated via COVAX; and which countries will receive those doses.

**Wendy Morton:**

On 30 October, we announced a further donation of 20 million Oxford-AstraZeneca doses. Of this, 10 million has already been sent to COVAX, and 10 million more are due to be delivered in the coming weeks, for onward transmission to some of the world's most vulnerable people. This means that at least 30.7 million surplus doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca will have been donated in 2021.

The UK, COVAX and AZ are working closely together and with international partners such as UNICEF to allocate vaccines according to need, facilitate the rapid delivery of doses and maximise the shelf life available to recipients. This includes the provision of regular forecasts to COVAX to assist planning. Doses are also sent directly by AZ to UNICEF, rather than having to be processed by the UK Government. Vaccines delivered by COVAX are distributed in line with the World

Health Organisation's 'equitable allocation framework', which helps ensure COVAX doses reach those countries most in need. Recipient countries are informed of vaccine expiry dates, and doses are delivered in consultation with countries that are ready and able to begin immediate roll out.

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

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[69185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate she has made of the number of ivory items owned by or collated by her Department.

**Vicky Ford:**

We have not made any estimates of the number of ivory items owned by or collated in this Department or institutions owned or managed by the Government.

■ **Ilois: Finance**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[67088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much of the 10 year £40 million Chagossian Support Package, announced by the Government on 16 November 2016 has been spent in total; and how much of that funding has been spent on (a) Chagossian heritage visits, (b) in the UK, (c) in Mauritius, (d) in Seychelles and (e) elsewhere.

**Amanda Milling:**

To date the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and previously the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have spent a total of £810,324.59 of the Chagossian Support Package announced by the Government on 16 November 2016. This total is made up of £571,073.52 on Heritage Visits to the British Indian Ocean Territory, £176,334.65 on projects in the UK and £62,916.42 on projects in Mauritius.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[67089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what projects have been funded from the £40 million Chagossian Support Package in the last five years since 16 November 2016; and what effect that funding has had on the livelihoods of Chagossian communities in (a) Mauritius, (b) the Seychelles and (c) the UK.

**Amanda Milling:**

In the UK, several projects have been funded by the Chagossian Support Package, including:

- A health and wellbeing project launched in Wythenshawe to increase Chagossians' digital access through the provision of IT equipment;
- A music project launched in Crawley focusing on increasing employability, wellbeing and awareness of Chagossian music and culture among the local community;

- The provision of English language courses at Crawley College to help adult learners attain the requisite language skills to enhance their employability;
- The provision of statements of comparability by the UK National Information Centre, enabling recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills attained outside of the UK.

In Mauritius, the British Council has provided English language courses to over 200+ participants (since 2019). In addition, the British Council has launched a business skills training programme which supports Chagossian women to develop and grow their businesses. 18 trainees are due to complete the inaugural course in December 2021. There have also been eight heritage visits to the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) since 2017 involving 154 Chagossians. The last one was in February 2020. Visits are currently suspended due to COVID-19. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is continuing to seek opportunities to establish projects for Chagossians living in the Seychelles.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[67090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what future expenditure is planned from the £40 million Chagossian Support Package; and in which countries that spending is planned.

**Amanda Milling:**

The FCDO continues to explore options for expenditure of the Chagossian Support Package in line with the areas of support announced by Ministers in 2016: Health, Social Care, Education, Employment, and Culture (awareness and retention). The Package is designed to support Chagossians in the communities where they live - principally this is in the UK, Mauritius and Seychelles.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Weapons

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[67129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate her Department has made of the breakout time of Iran's nuclear weapons programme.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments since 2019 and continues to escalate its nuclear programme. Its nuclear programme is now more advanced than ever before. Iran's production of Highly Enriched Uranium and use of powerful advanced centrifuges continue to decrease breakout time. We strongly urge Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPOA, without delay and take the opportunity in front of them to restore the JCPOA through the Vienna talks.

## ■ Italy: G20

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[67250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she held with the Welsh Government ahead of the G20 Summit in Rome.

**Amanda Milling:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office promotes the international interests of all parts of the UK and continues to regularly engage with the Welsh Government, and other Devolved Administrations, on international areas relevant to their devolved competence, and on topical issues, such as climate change.

Responsibility for foreign affairs and international development is reserved to the UK government. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Ministers did not hold specific discussions with the Welsh Government ahead of the G20 Summit in Rome.

## ■ Kashmir: Human Rights

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[69159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the scale of human rights violations in Kashmir; and what assessment she has made of the accuracy of the 2020 Human Rights and Democracy Report with respect to Kashmir.

**Amanda Milling:**

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered-Kashmir and Pakistan-administered-Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights violations or abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly and transparently. We have raised our concerns with the Governments of India and Pakistan.

## ■ Kashmir: Press Freedom

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[69160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on press freedom in Kashmir.

**Amanda Milling:**

Freedom of expression and of the media are essential qualities of any functioning democracy. We are concerned by reports of some ongoing detentions of journalists and call for these to be lifted as soon as possible. We also work closely with the Indian media, including by funding an annual South Asia Journalism Fellowship Programme under our flagship Chevening brand. Last year, we funded 17 fellows, including seven from India.



**■ Kashmir: Riot Control Weapons****Gill Furniss:**[\[69161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the scale of the current use of pellet guns by Indian security forces in Kashmir; and what discussions she has had with her Indian counterpart on the use of those weapons.

**Amanda Milling:**

We have previously expressed concern at reports of use of pellet guns by Indian security forces. The UN Secretary General also expressed concern in a June report and called on India to end the use of shotgun pellets against children. Ministers and senior officials have raised our concerns with the Indian Government and we call on all states to take preventive measures to protect children.

**■ Lebanon: Palestinians****Wayne David:**[\[69013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the effect of Lebanon's economic crisis on the humanitarian welfare of Palestinian refugees in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is one of the leading donors in supporting Lebanon to host both Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Since 2011, the UK has allocated over £787 million in humanitarian and development funding to Lebanon. Our humanitarian assistance will continue to promote access to education and provide those most in need with timely, flexible assistance and protection services to cover their basic survival needs and reduce gender-based violence, saving lives and reducing suffering. The UK is also a key supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides vital services to Palestinian refugees across their five fields of operation, including in Lebanon.

**■ Nasrin Sotoudeh****Hilary Benn:**[\[67065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her Iranian counterpart on the imprisonment of the human rights defender Nasrin Sotoudeh in Iran.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK Government has repeatedly raised Nasrin Sotoudeh's ongoing detention with the Iranian authorities. On 25 September, the UK joined 46 other countries in calling for her release at the Human Rights Council. We have designated Iran as a Human Rights Priority Country, and press Iran to improve its poor human rights at every appropriate opportunity, including by taking action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record. Human Rights Defenders worldwide must be able to carry out their work safely and without fear.

## ■ **Palestinians: Health Services**

**Wayne David:**

[\[69014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the healthcare needs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the context of the outbreak of covid-19.

**James Cleverly:**

We welcome the steps that the Israeli and Palestinian authorities have taken so far to coordinate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage further dialogue in this regard. The UK is committed to global equitable access to effective vaccines as demonstrated by our £548 million contribution to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment - the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines. The Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) were among the first to benefit from the COVAX scheme with its first delivery of vaccines on 17 March 2021. Since that initial shipment, several further deliveries have arrived in the OPTs, including most recently on 25 August 2021.

**Wayne David:**

[\[69015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the impact of reductions in UK official development assistance to support the salaries of healthcare professionals on the delivery of essential healthcare services in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK remains firmly committed to ensuring access to essential healthcare services for all Palestinians. We are a longstanding supporter to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides core services, including healthcare to Palestinian refugees in Gaza. The UK Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities.

## ■ **Sri Lanka: Torture**

**Feryal Clark:**

[\[67295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the report by Yasmin Sooka and Frances Harrison, entitled Sri Lanka: Torture and Sexual Violence by Security Forces 2020-2021, published in September 2021; and what representations she has made to her counterparts in Sri Lanka on systematic torture and sexual violence perpetuated by security forces in that country.

**Amanda Milling:**

The UK Government notes the report entitled Sri Lanka: Torture and Sexual Violence by Security Forces 2020-2021 and is concerned by the allegations contained within it. The UK takes allegations of torture and sexual violence very seriously, and we continue to push the government of Sri Lanka to take action on accountability for violations committed during and after the conflict, including crimes of sexual violence,

as part of wider engagement on transitional justice. This is through the UK-led resolution UN Human Rights Council resolution 46/1 on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. The resolution also expresses concern at alleged torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

The Minister for South Asia Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon has raised the importance of these issues on several occasions with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner and the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris, most recently during calls on 10 May and 24 September respectively. The Foreign Secretary raised the importance of upholding human rights when she met with Foreign Minister Peiris on 26 October. We will continue to press for a strong role for the UNHRC to help deliver accountability and reconciliation and ensure the protection of human rights in Sri Lanka.

## ■ Sub-Saharan Africa: Carbon Emissions and Climate Change

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[67252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent support she has provided to sub-Saharan countries to help those countries (a) mitigate the effects of climate change and (b) reduce their carbon emissions.

**Vicky Ford:**

As COP26 President, the UK is committed to driving action to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees and support countries most vulnerable adapt to the impacts of climate change. The UK is a long-standing supporter of African adaptation, with around half of our £2.7 billion adaptation budget between 2016 and 2020 spent in Africa. We have strengthened these commitments at COP26, contributing £20 million to the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Programme to support at-risk communities build resilience; and providing a guarantee to the African Development Bank, releasing up to \$2bn of climate finance - half of which will be for adaptation. We also recognise the importance of Africa's forested areas to mitigating climate change impacts and limiting global temperature rise. At the World Leaders Summit Forests and Land Use Event, the UK contributed £200 million to a landmark £1.1 billion donor pledge to protect the Congo Basin - the world's second largest rainforest - and support the region's long-term green economic development.

Affordable and clean energy is also critical to African nations' development. The UK launched the COP26 Energy Transition Council to help accelerate Africa's transition to clean energy and support for an equitable transition from coal. At COP26 the UK - alongside the governments of South Africa, France, Germany, the US and EU - announced a new Just Energy Transition Partnership to support South Africa's decarbonisation efforts. The partnership - worth \$8.5 billion over the next 3-5 years - is expected to prevent up to 1.5 gigatons of emissions over the next 20 years. It will support South Africa to move away from coal and to accelerate its transition to a low emission, climate resilient economy.

## ■ Sub-Saharan Africa: Vaccination

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[67251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her international counterparts on supporting vaccination programmes across sub-Saharan Africa.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK has donated £548 million to COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) that has delivered over 111 million vaccine doses to 44 African AMC countries. The UK has also donated over 5.9 million surplus doses to countries in Africa. Our G7 Presidency secured agreement from leaders to support vaccinating the world and to share and finance an additional 1 billion doses over the next year. This includes a commitment from the UK to share 100 million doses, 80% of which will go to COVAX.

The UK is an active member of the Vaccine Funder's Forum that includes the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), Gavi, World Bank and all major donors. The forum meets bi-weekly to monitor progress and ensure better coordination among partners. The Foreign Secretary recently met India's Minister of External Affairs Dr Jaishankar and welcomed India's plans to resume supplying vaccines to COVAX. Last month, I [Minister Ford] attended World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) annual meetings, where I raised the importance of ensuring longer-term vaccine financing for Africa and encouraged better coordination and cooperation between partners. I [Minister Ford] have also recently met the Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control, Dr Nkengasong, and discussed vaccine supplies to Africa.

## ■ Western Sahara: Self-determination of States

**Ben Lake:**

[\[67233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to Answer of 22 September 2021 to Question on Western Sahara: Self Determination of States, whether the inclusion of independence as an option in the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara was raised during discussions with the parties.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK supports UN-led efforts to reach a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, based on compromise, that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We strongly support the work of the new Personal Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, and look forward to the start of the renewed political process.

## ■ Yemen: Human Rights

**Wayne David:**

[\[69016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason the Government decided not to sign the joint statement on the human rights situation in Yemen that was issued by 37 countries on 29 October 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

Yemen remains a human rights priority country for the UK and we have used our role as penholder at the UN Security Council to help push the Yemen peace process forward and end the conflict. We share the regret expressed in the statement that the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was not renewed. The UK voted in favour of renewal and spoke in support of the resolution during the voting. As we made clear during the Human Rights Council session of 7 October, we are concerned by reports of serious and wide-ranging human rights violations and abuses by parties to the conflict. The Group had a crucial role to play in providing ongoing reporting on the actions of parties. The UK will continue to urge the parties involved to investigate these allegations and take action to promote and protect human rights.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Abortion: Domestic Abuse****Sarah Champion:**[\[68287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of home use of both pills for early medical abortions on women in abusive domestic situations, who may not otherwise have been able to access abortion care.

**Sarah Champion:**[\[68288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the home use of both pills for early medical abortions on disabled women, who may have different access needs which affect their capacity to visit hospitals and clinics in person or must forgo privacy in order to attend appointments or access clinic premises.

**Sarah Champion:**[\[68289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the home use of both pills for early medical abortions on women from socially disadvantaged areas who may face challenges in accessing in-clinic appointments as a result of costs, including childcare and transport.

**Sarah Champion:**[\[68290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the home use of both pills for early medical abortions on women living in rural areas who may have to travel long distances to access in-clinic care.

**Maggie Throup:**

We are considering all evidence submitted to the Government's public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. The consultation asked questions relating to the impact on the provision of abortion

services for women and girls accessing these services with particular regard to safety, accessibility, including travel constraints and health outcomes experienced by different socioeconomic groups. We will publish our response in due course.

■ **Ambulance Services: Yorkshire and the Humber**

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[61118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what Yorkshire Ambulance Service's average response time is over the past 12 months for which figures are available, for (a) Category 1 calls, (b) Category 2 calls and (c) Category 3 calls.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* The Yorkshire Ambulance Service's average response time over the past twelve months for (a) Category 1 calls, (b) Category 2 calls and (c) Category 3 calls in the last 12 months for the Sept 2020 to Oct 2021 period is as below:

Category 1: 8 minutes, 14 seconds

Category 2: 27 minutes, 27 seconds

Category 3: 1 hour, 19 minutes, 48 seconds

■ **Autism: Screening**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[67156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will allocate additional funding to support an increase in autism testing.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are investing over £13 million of additional funding in 2021/2022 to improve assessments and diagnosis of autism, including addressing waiting times in England. In addition, through our new autism strategy, we are funding an early identification pilot in which healthcare and education staff are assessing children who may be autistic within schools.

■ **Blood Cancer: Coronavirus**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[60414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions officials in his Department have had with Blood Cancer UK on the number of cases of blood cancer that are being missed as result of the symptoms of that disease being similar to those of covid-19.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such discussions have taken place.

## ■ Breast Cancer: Medical Treatments

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[56436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to address the delays caused by the covid-19 pandemic, in patients beginning breast cancer treatment.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Between March 2020 and August 2021, 63,908 patients started their treatment for breast cancer, with 95% (60,842) starting this within 31 days of a decision to treat.

NHS England and Improvement is focusing on reducing the number of people waiting over 62 days on cancer pathways. A further £5.4 billion funding package is available for October 2021 to March 2022. This includes an additional £500m of capital investment funding and £1 billion additional funding for elective activity, which will support the recovery of cancer elective activity. This funding is being used to support evening and weekend clinics to meet demand for services.

## ■ Cancer: Health Services

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[67154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support GP's to make urgent cancer referrals to NHS hospitals.

**Maria Caulfield:**

An Early Cancer Diagnosis Specification for Primary Care Networks (PCNs) was introduced in October 2020, with a particular focus on optimising referral practice. There is also a Quality and Outcome Framework Quality Improvement module to improve referral practice and improving screening uptake in 2021/22. NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing resources to support PCNs and general practitioners (GPs) to review their referral practices for cancer.

Rapid diagnostic centres for patients with non-specific symptoms provide a new referral pathway for GPs, assisting them to refer those with symptoms which could indicate a range of cancers.

## ■ Catheters: Medical Records

**Martyn Day:**

[\[66238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to require NHS hospitals to record the date of catheterisation as part of a patient's care record.

**Edward Argar:**

Recording the date of catheterisation is part of professional record keeping within health and social care. Medical and nursing professions have outlined standards for record keeping in the Nursing and Midwifery Council's Code and the General Medical Council's good medical practice. NHS England has published guidance and tools to



support record keeping and there are plans to enhance these resources through the use of digital media.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[68470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has any plans to introduce rapid covid saliva tests for (a) primary or (b) secondary school children.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is currently trialling the use of direct LAMP, the most mature saliva test validated and available to deploy, for individuals with special educational needs and disabilities in a small number of restricted pilots. It is also being considered for other appropriate settings. In addition, the UKHSA is undertaking a review into alternatives to swab-based testing including all saliva-based options and other emerging technologies, in all vulnerable settings and populations.

At present, the public health advice does not recommend routine, asymptomatic testing of primary school aged children, though we will continue to explore options in response to any changes in evidence. Secondary school aged children have been able to access twice weekly swab-based lateral flow device testing through the asymptomatic testing programme.

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[68478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of introducing a lollipop-style covid-19 testing method for children on the (a) accuracy of tests and (b) frequency of testing of children by parents.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency is currently trialling the use of direct LAMP, the most mature saliva test validated and available to deploy, for individuals with special educational needs and disabilities in a small number of restricted pilots. It is also being considered for other appropriate settings. These trials will consider a range of factors around the benefits of the tests and how they are used. The UKHSA will continue to review and evaluate the usability of emerging technologies.

## ■ **Dental Services: Armed Forces**

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

[\[68141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that families of armed service personnel are not disadvantaged in accessing (a) NHS dentistry and (b) NHS orthodontics.

**Maria Caulfield:**

All members of the armed forces community are protected against facing disadvantage in access to public services, including National Health Service dental and orthodontic care, through the Armed Forces Covenant.

NHS dental practices have been asked to prioritise urgent care, care for vulnerable groups followed by delayed planned care. This applies to all patients, including the families of armed forces personnel.

#### ■ Dental Services: Asylum

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[68173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department provides to help asylum seekers access dental care on the NHS.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[68174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department provides to help asylum seekers access dental care in situations where they are unable to access a dentist on the NHS.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Asylum seekers can access National Health Service dental care from any NHS dental practice.

Patients, including asylum seekers, can contact NHS England's Customer Contact Centre for assistance where they are unable to access a dentist or NHS 111 if seeking urgent care. Proof of address is not needed to access an NHS dentist. There is also no requirement for a patient to provide photo identification or proof of immigration status to access NHS dentistry.

#### ■ Dental Services: Finance

**Dr Andrew Murrison:** [\[68137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to review the effectiveness of (a) the 2006 dental contract and (b) payment by units of dental activity.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Government is currently reviewing the effectiveness of the 2006 National Health Service dental contract and payment by units of dental activity as part of our commitment to improve NHS dentistry. NHS England and NHS Improvement are developing proposals for dental system reform, working closely with the Department and key stakeholders.

#### ■ Dental Services: Wiltshire

**Dr Andrew Murrison:** [\[68134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of complaints to Healthwatch Wiltshire relate to NHS dental services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department does not hold this data.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

[\[68138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value is of a unit of dental activity for each NHS dental practice in Wiltshire.

**Maria Caulfield:**

This information is not held in the format available. A general dental services contract or personal dental services agreement covers a range of activity and service. The units of dental activity, against which contracts are monitored, form only part of those arrangements and therefore are not assigned a specific value.

■ **Dentistry: Training**

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

[\[68135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of foundation year dental graduates were employed in private practices in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

**Maria Caulfield:**

In the last five years, no dental foundation trainees have been employed in exclusively private practices. Health Education England appoint dental graduates to training practices with National Health Service contracts and where the educational supervisor is carrying out a high proportion of NHS dentistry.

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

[\[68142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many places at dental school will be available in each year to 2035, by dental school.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Office for Students (OfS) allocates places to dental schools on an annual basis. In the academic year 2021/22, in England, there were 983 dental school places allocated, including places for overseas students. Allocations for the 2022/23 academic year will be issued by the OfS in December 2021.

The following table shows the number of dental places per dental school in 2021/22.

DENTAL SCHOOL	PLACES
Birmingham	86
Bristol	93
University of Central Lancashire	34
King's College London	162
Leeds	84
Liverpool	84
Manchester	92

DENTAL SCHOOL	PLACES
Newcastle	71
Plymouth	82
Queen Mary University of London	107
Sheffield	88

Following the Spending Review 2021, spending plans for individual budgets, including for the training and education of the dental workforce, will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course. Longer term workforce planning will be subject to future spending reviews.

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[56480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve his Department's response times to correspondence from members of the public.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government recognises the importance of responding to members of the public in an effective and timely manner. The Cabinet Office published an updated 'Guide to Handling Correspondence' for Government Departments and agencies in July 2021.

The guidance reasserts the standards for handling correspondence, including a 20 working day deadline for Departments to respond to members of the public, criteria outlining when a response to a member of the public is required and when correspondence from a member of the public should be transferred to another Department. Following publication of the updated guidance, all Departments have been reminded that they must follow the processes outlined in the guidance.

To 17 October 2021, the Department has replied to 85% of cases from the public within its target of 18 working days. We aim to reply to 90% within this timeframe. We are deploying additional resource to improve this performance.

## ■ Disability: Children and Young People

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[69701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to use the £5.9 billion NHS covid recovery funding, announced at the Spending Review on 27 October 2021, to help disabled children and young people recover lost progress in managing their conditions during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Gillian Keegan:**

On 6 September, the Government announced plans to spend over £8 billion over the Spending Review period between 2022/23 to 2024/25 for a programme to assist the National Health Service to provide elective care delayed by the pandemic.

We have also announced an additional £5.4 billion to support the COVID-19 response over the next six months, bringing the total Government support for health services in response to COVID-19 to over £34 billion this year 2021/22. This includes £2 billion to tackle the elective backlog and reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Females

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[64619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to recognise domestic abuse as a driver of mental ill-health in the upcoming Women's Health Strategy.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 1 November 2021]:* Research suggests that women experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to experience poor mental health outcomes.

We are currently working to analyse the responses to the Call for Evidence, which was launched as part of the new Women's Health Strategy for England.

The evidence gathered through the Call for Evidence will inform the priorities, content and actions of the Strategy. This will ensure that the Strategy is evidence-based and reflects what women identify as priorities.

## ■ Electronic Cigarettes: Research

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to supporting research into the long-term impact of e-cigarettes on public health.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will continue to monitor the evidence base of research on e-cigarettes, including their long-term impact on health. The next review will be published in spring 2022, including analyses on flavourings, cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular disease as well as trends in youth and adult behaviours.

## ■ Endometriosis: Screening

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[57300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to establish a national screening programme for endometriosis.

**Maggie Throup:**

National population screening programmes are implemented in the National Health Service on the advice of the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC), which makes independent, evidence-based recommendations to Ministers. The UK NSC has not assessed the evidence to screen for endometriosis and there

are no current plans to do so. However, the UK NSC's annual call for new screening topics is open until 6 December 2021.

### ■ Gambling: Clinics

**Gerald Jones:** [\[68376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeline is for establishing the remaining specialist gambling clinics as set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The National Health Service has committed to opening 15 specialist problem gambling clinics by 2023/24. Four clinics are already in operation, in London, Leeds, Manchester and Sunderland. Work continues on the phased expansion, enabling the NHS to explore how best to use existing treatment models to reach those most in need of support.

### ■ Gambling: Health Services

**Gerald Jones:** [\[68377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a clinically informed assessment of the effectiveness of the voluntary support system for gambling harm has been carried out.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* A clinically informed assessment has not been carried out.

### ■ General Practitioners

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking (a) in response to increases in demand for GP services and (b) to support GPs to meet that demand.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will work with GPs to help tackle the increased pressures on general practice; and if he will take steps to ensure that general practices are supported to deal with the additional pressures that result from winter.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* On 14 October we published 'Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice' to assist patients to see or speak to general practitioners and their teams, through a new £250 million Winter Access Fund.

We have committed additional funding to NHS England to implement the adoption of cloud-based telephony technology across all practices. These systems can benefit

patients by making more phone lines available and providing automated queueing, and allow practices determine the administrative support they need for call handling.

## ■ General Practitioners: Pay

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[69135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of moving to a model of salaried GPs.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The General Practice Partnership Review (June 2019) considered the merits of the current partnership model. Most GP practices are operated by a partnership of two or more GPs, who are contracted to the NHS to provide primary care services. The GP partners are responsible for employing other staff to provide services, such as salaried GPs. GP partnerships, individually and through new Primary Care Networks, deliver high quality care to patients all over the country and are well-placed to meet the needs of local communities.

We recognise some GPs are less interested in going into partnership. The partnership model is not the only model currently delivering general practice. GP practices can and do choose to organise themselves in different ways, with differing proportions of partners and salaried doctors. Nationally, as of 30 September 2021, 35% of all fully qualified doctors in general practice (Full Time Equivalent) are salaried.

While partnerships holding a GP contract continue to be in the majority, it is important that sustainable alternative models are available where the difficulties of recruitment and retention may mean that a partnership model cannot thrive. In February 2021 NHS England and NHS Improvement updated guidance on alternative organisational forms, including a toolkit and key considerations, to make it easier for GP practices and commissioners to decide if a different approach is right for them.

## ■ General Practitioners: Staff

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[69134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review his workforce plan for general practice and take further steps to ensure that there is an adequate (a) number of trained staff and (b) mix of skills among those staff.

**Maria Caulfield:**

As Private contractors, GPs make their own workforce plans and hiring decisions, however we encourage recruitment of certain roles through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). Under the Primary Care Network Direct Enhanced Services, PCNs are able to recruit new roles to expand their care team with full reimbursement through the ARRS.



## ■ Headaches: Health Services

**Jim Shannon:**

**[69076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who experience migraines are able to access NHS support.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Health Service (NHS) is taking a number of practical steps to support those who suffer from migraines including the use of headache diaries for patients to record the frequency and pattern of their attack and support hotlines for General Practitioners to access specialist advice.

Patients presenting to 111 with migraine related symptoms will be assessed by the NHS Pathways Clinical Decision Support System and referred onwards depending on their symptoms. This ranges from immediate ambulance through to self-care depending on the presenting symptoms.

Additionally, the RightCare Headache and Migraines Toolkit should continue to be used by local clinical commissioning groups to ensure that people suffering from migraines are supported effectively. The toolkit sets out the key priorities for improvement, including correct identification and diagnosis of headache disorders and long-term management of patients in primary or community care. The toolkit is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/rightcare/products/pathways/headache-and-migraine-toolkit/>

## ■ Health Services: Disadvantaged

**Nickie Aiken:**

**[61217]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reduce inequalities in healthcare and (b) prevent the avoidable death of Asian and Asian British babies.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 27 October 2021]:* The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) sets out a systematic approach to reducing health inequalities and addressing unwarranted variation in care by targeting a higher share of funding towards geographies with high health inequalities than would have been allocated using solely the core needs formulae. As a condition of receiving Long Term Plan funding, all major national programmes and every local area across England is required to set out specific measurable goals and mechanisms by which they will contribute to narrowing health inequalities by 2029.

On 1 October, we launched the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Reducing health disparities is one of the core aims of the office and it will set out its plans for delivering on this objective in due course

To improve equity for mothers and babies from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups, NHS England and NHS Improvement published 'Equity and Equality:

Guidance for Local Maternity Systems' on 6 September, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/equity-and-equality-guidance-for-local-maternity-systems/>

This guidance asks Local Maternity Systems (LMS) to produce an equity and equality analysis (covering health outcomes, community assets and staff experience) by 30 November 2021; and to co-produce an action plan to improve equity for mothers and babies from minority ethnic and other backgrounds, and race equality for NHS maternity staff by 28 February 2022. The guidance is supported by a £6.8 million investment.

LMS are being asked to include four interventions to prevent avoidable deaths of babies in their action plans: (1) targeted and enhanced continuity of carer with 75% of women from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups receiving continuity of carer by 2024 and additional midwifery time to support women from the most deprived areas, (2) smoke-free pregnancy pathways for mothers and their partners, (3) breastfeeding strategies to improve breastfeeding rates for women living in the most deprived areas, and (4) culturally-sensitive genetics services for consanguineous couples. The guidance is supported by a £6.8 million investment, which will support Local Maternity Systems to implement Equity and Equality Action Plans and implement targeted and enhanced Continuity of Carer.

## ■ Health Services: Safety

**Martyn Day:**

**[66239]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to replace the NHS Safety Thermometer with an equivalent system to track patient safety in NHS hospitals and community facilities.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have no plans to replace the National Health Service Safety Thermometer. The data generated from the thermometer has been shown to be not fit for current purposes and alternative data is available from other existing sources.

For falls prevention, pressure ulcer prevention, venous thromboembolism and catheter associated urinary tract infections, there is a well-established National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance or equivalent guidelines providing the best evidence on how to reduce harm. Such guidance is supported by a range of national audits and improvement capacity building, including support for measurement for improvement and new sources of patient safety data provided by Model Health Systems.

**■ Health Services: Waiting Lists****John Redwood:**[\[68978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a detailed plan for reducing the waiting lists of NHS England including details on staffing and use of current NHS capacity.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement will publish a delivery plan for recovering elective services later this year.

**■ Home Care Services: Registration****Rachael Maskell:**[\[67193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 36676 on Home Care Services, what steps she is taking to help ensure that the Care Quality Commission assesses the (a) ownership and (b) regulatory history of a provider, including an assessment of the owner's business history.

**Gillian Keegan:**

An individual person, partnership or organisation carrying on a regulated activity in England, as listed in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, must be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Through registration, CQC can ensure that only those who are judged to be fit and likely to provide and manage good quality care are authorised to do so.

When considering a new application for registration, CQC considers any relevant information it holds on the applicants, including their previous regulatory history. In the case of organisations, CQC does not register or regulate owners or the ownership of a provider. Instead, CQC would assess a provider's compliance with Regulation 5, 'fit and proper persons' under which, providers have a duty to ensure that the director level persons they appoint are 'fit and proper' persons. The providers' checks include assessing the directors' previous regulatory history, Companies House information and fit and proper persons interview. Where CQC has concerns about either the provider's assessment processes or the director or owner, CQC may refuse the application for registration.

In cases where the service provider is an individual or partnership, Regulation 4, 'Requirements where the service provider is an individual or partnership', would apply. The registered provider or their partners must demonstrate to CQC their suitability to the role, including by providing a full employment history, be of good character and have the necessary skills, competence, qualifications and experience. CQC can refuse registration if it is not satisfied with compliance with the regulation.

## ■ Hospitals: Shropshire

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [\[69032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) Welsh Government and (b) other devolved officials in that country on delays to the Hospitals Transformation Programme in Shropshire.

**Edward Argar:**

A meeting took place between the Minister of State for Health and local MP's regarding the Hospitals Transformation Programme in Shropshire in September 2021. As of yet no discussions have taken place with the Welsh Government concerning the Hospitals Transformation Programme in Shropshire.

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [\[69033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeline is for the revised Strategic Outline Case for the Hospitals Transformation Programme in Shropshire.

**Edward Argar:**

The Strategic Outline Case has been submitted to NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams for initial review. We are expecting the business case to be progressed to the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement national teams for joint review in early 2022.

## ■ Immensa Health Clinic: Contracts

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[68343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the new contract with Immensa to deliver further covid-19 tests was agreed before or after the discovery of false negative covid-19 test results by the company for people testing in the South West.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The contract was awarded to Immensa Health Clinic Ltd in August 2021 prior to the recent findings under investigation.

## ■ Immensa Health Clinic: South West

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[68341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the false negative covid-19 test results returned by Immensa on (a) people affected and (b) rates of transmission in the South West region.

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[68344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assistance he is providing to health bodies and people in the South West affected by the false negative covid-19 test results in the South West; and if he will make a statement.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* Investigations are ongoing.

On 15 October 2021, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) alerted the public and endeavoured to contact every person who may have been affected, recommending a further test if they were likely to be infectious. Briefings were held with local authorities, Directors of Public Health and public health teams. Samples were diverted to other laboratories to ensure there was no loss of testing provision in the South West. The UKHSA, the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities and NHS England continue to support the regional Directors of Public Health.

## ■ Immunosuppression and Kidney Diseases: Coronavirus

**Dan Jarvis:**

[60425]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that healthcare facilities continue to provide covid-19 safe environments for (a) kidney dialysis patients, (b) kidney transplant recipients and (c) patients who are on, or have recently received, immunosuppressants.

**Dan Jarvis:**

[60426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his department is taking to support clinically extremely vulnerable kidney patients to follow advanced precautions since the end of the covid-19 shielding programme was announced.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 26 October 2021]:* The Government has issued detailed guidance regarding COVID-19 and maintaining services within health and care settings, including those attended by kidney dialysis patients, kidney transplant recipients and those taking immunosuppressants. The full guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-guidance-for-maintaining-services-within-health-and-care-settings-infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations>

The guidance includes specific advice regarding individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, setting out that they will require Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures depending on their medical condition and treatment, for example, prioritisation for single room accommodation.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has also published a COVID-19 rapid guideline for dialysis service delivery. The guideline is for health and care staff and commissioners and sets out advice on how to maximise the safety of patients on dialysis. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng160/resources/covid19-rapid-guideline-dialysis-service-delivery-pdf-66141894031045>

Given the successful roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, the COVID-19 shielding programme has ended. Patients who were previously identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, including kidney disease patients, are advised to continue to follow the general guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread and

take advice from their health professional on whether additional precautions may be needed. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

## ■ Infant Mortality

**Catherine West:**

[58468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase funding for the NHS to tackle stillbirth and neonatal deaths.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department has funded the National Health Service to implement a range of initiatives to tackle stillbirths and neonatal deaths including the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle which standardises across all NHS maternity services five evidence-based elements of care demonstrated to reduce stillbirths and neonatal deaths: reducing smoking in pregnancy; risk assessment, prevention and surveillance of pregnancies at risk of fetal growth restriction; raising awareness of reduced fetal movement; effective fetal monitoring during labour and reducing preterm birth.

New funding for maternity services announced this year includes £95m to recruit 1,200 midwives and 100 consultant obstetricians to ensure safe staffing levels so that women, babies and their families receive the personalised midwifery care they need.

An additional £52m is also being provided to ensure that all women have access to their maternity notes and information through a smart phone by 2023/24. This will enable women to easily access information regarding their pregnancy and communicate any concerns with their midwife or obstetrician to reduce the risk of stillbirth and neonatal deaths.

£6.8m is being provided to support Local Maternity Systems to implement Equity and Equality Strategies to reduce variations in the rates of stillbirths and neonatal deaths for babies from different ethnic or disadvantaged backgrounds.

We have no current plans to provide additional new funding.

**Matt Vickers:**

[67308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reduce rates of stillbirth and neonatal deaths and (b) address racial inequalities in stillbirths and neonatal deaths; and if his Department will launch an inquiry into the rates of stillbirth and neonatal death among Asian and Asian British babies.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department has funded the National Health Service to implement a range of initiatives to reduce stillbirths and neonatal rates, including the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle which standardises five evidence-based elements of care demonstrated to reduce stillbirths and neonatal deaths; reducing smoking in pregnancy; risk assessment, prevention and surveillance of pregnancies at risk of fetal growth restriction; raising awareness of reduced fetal movement; effective fetal monitoring

during labour and reducing pre-term birth. There has been a 25% reduction in the stillbirth rate and a 29% reduction in the neonatal mortality rate for babies born after 24 weeks gestation since 2010.

NHS England and NHS Improvement published 'Equity and Equality: Guidance for Local Maternity Systems' on 6 September. This guidance asks Local Maternity Systems (LMS) to produce an analysis on health outcomes by 30 November 2021 and an action plan for mothers and babies from minority ethnic and other backgrounds. The guidance is supported by £6.8 million for LMS to implement these plans and targeted and enhanced continuity of carer. LMS are being asked to include four interventions to prevent avoidable deaths of babies in their action plans:

- targeted and enhanced continuity of carer for 75% of women from black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups by 2024 and additional midwifery time to support women from the most deprived areas;
- smoke-free pregnancy pathways for mothers and their partners;
- breastfeeding strategies to improve breastfeeding rates for women living in the most deprived areas; and
- culturally-sensitive genetics services for consanguineous couples.

A confidential enquiry into perinatal deaths of Black/Black British babies is currently being undertaken by the MBRRACE-UK Maternal, Newborn and Infant Clinical Outcome Review Programme. The Department has no current plans to concurrently establish an inquiry into the rates of stillbirth and neonatal deaths among Asian and Asian British babies.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[59858]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase uptake of the flu vaccine.

**Maggie Throup:**

We are continuing with an extended flu vaccination programme for the 2021/22 flu season and over 35 million people will now be eligible for a free flu vaccine. NHS England and NHS Improvement have recommissioned the national call and recall service to complement local mechanisms to targeting groups of eligible individuals, informing them of their eligibility and inviting them to make an appointment for their flu vaccination.

In addition, this year's marketing campaign includes terrestrial television, video on demand and radio advertising will run across a nine-week schedule, digital and social media channels, activities aimed at multicultural groups, stakeholder partnerships and public relations.



## ■ Joint Replacements: Greater London

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[69149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in South East London CCG were waiting 18 weeks or more for (a) hip and (b) knee replacement surgery in each month from February 2020 to July 2021.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[69150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in South East London CCG were waiting 52 weeks or more for (a) hip and (b) knee replacement surgery in each month from February 2020 to July 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

The number of people waiting for hip and knee replacements is not captured separately but is a sub-set of trauma and orthopaedic data.

The number of people in South East London CCG waiting 18 weeks or more or 52 weeks or more for trauma and orthopaedic treatments in each month from February 2020 to July 2021 has been presented in the table below.

Data is only available from April 2020 as this was the point that the South East London CCG was formed.

NUMBER OF PATIENTS WAITING FOR TRAUMA AND ORTHOPAEDIC TREATMENT (INCLUDES HIP AND KNEE REPLACEMENTS) FOR THE SOUTH EAST LONDON CCG

Date	18+ week waiters	52+ week waiters
February 2020	-	-
March 2020	-	-
April 2020	5,012	148
May 2020	6,168	294
June 2020	7,930	521
July 2020	8,932	690
August 2020	7,922	746
September 2020	6,345	753
October 2020	4,958	663
November 2020	4,061	650
December 2020	3,830	759
January 2021	4,490	1,078

NUMBER OF PATIENTS WAITING FOR TRAUMA AND ORTHOPAEDIC TREATMENT (INCLUDES HIP AND KNEE REPLACEMENTS) FOR THE SOUTH EAST LONDON CCG

February 2021	5,559	1,422
March 2021	6,257	1,490
April 2021	6,730	1,248
May 2021	6,106	1,056
June 2021	5,792	979
July 2021	5,482	803

■ **Kidney Diseases: Dialysis Machines**

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[62569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many renal dialysis services in England support 20 per cent or more of their patients to receive dialysis treatment at home; and how he plans to ensure that renal services will be incorporated into Integrated Care Service plans.

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[\[62570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that Integrated Care Systems support renal centres to meet the recommendation set out within the GIRFT Programme National Specialty Report for Renal Medicine to achieve a minimum prevalent rate of home dialysis of 20% within 12 months of that report's publication.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 28 October 2021]:* Of the 51 renal units within England, 16 units are supporting 20% or more of their patients to receive dialysis treatment at home. A further 16 units are providing home therapies to between 15% and 19% of their patients.

There are currently no plans to ask Integrated Care Systems to specifically include chronic kidney disease in their plans. However, both Integrated Care Boards' and Integrated Care Partnerships' plans and strategies should consider the health needs of the population they serve, including people with chronic kidney disease.

NHS England and Improvement has recently implemented 11 regional clinical networks to work closely with Integrated Care Systems to support the achievement of a minimum prevalent rate of home dialysis of 20 per cent, as outlined by the Renal Services Transformation Programme and the recently published Getting it Right First Time (GiRFT) report.

The GiRFT report makes an important recommendation that a key enabler of the dialysis programme will be the recruitment and training of a competent renal services workforce and so each of the networks will formulate a workforce plan to ensure delivery of the various standards.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[69111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average yearly cost per patient is of (a) in-centre and (b) home-dialysis, including the cost of treatment and management.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[69112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his most recent assessment is of the cost benefit to the NHS of the provision of dialysis services in a patient's home compared to dialysis services in-centre.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[69116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) health benefits to patients and (b) costs of opening dialysis centres from six to seven days per week; and if he will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The average yearly cost per patient (a) in-centre and (b) home-dialysis, including the cost of treatment and management, is below:

1. In-centre dialysis (assuming 3 cycles per week) £24,804 per year
2. Home dialysis (based upon 4-6 cycles per week) £25,116 per year

The information quoted relates to the National Health Service (NHS) in England only. Devolved Administrations will differ. All costs will be indicative only, as Market Forces Factor (MFF), transport costs, planned outpatient review and non-elective care will differ between patients and provider contracts.

No recent assessment of the cost benefit of home dialysis compared to in-centre has been made. Assessing such cost benefits to the NHS are part of the Renal Services Transformation Programme (RSTP), which commenced by NHS England in 2021. Cost benefit analysis will vary between providers based upon transport costs and existing demand and capacity constraints in local NHS facilities.

As outlined in the March 2021 Getting It Right First Time Programme National Specialty Report for Renal Medicine, there is a strong preference amongst patients for home dialysis. This is why one of the strategic aims of the RSTP is to increase the percentage of patients per centre receiving home therapies to 20%.

No recent estimate of the health benefits to patients or costs of opening dialysis centres from six to seven days per week has been made.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[69115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the total cost to the NHS of patient transport for in-centre dialysis patients in each of the past five years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

No such recent estimate has been made. The information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Mental Health

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[67273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to require Integrated Care Boards to report on their (a) past activity and (b) future plans to achieve parity of esteem between mental and physical health.

**Gillian Keegan:**

In exercising their commissioning functions under section 3 and 3A of the National Health Service Act 2006, integrated care boards (ICBs) must act consistently with the Secretary of State's duty to promote a comprehensive health service in England, to improve mental as well as physical health. ICBs, like clinical commissioning groups, will be expected to report on how they have discharged their commissioning functions and will be assessed by NHS England. However, NHS England do not intend to require ICBs to specifically report on their plans to achieve parity of esteem between mental and physical health.

## ■ Mental Health: Older People

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[67153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the mental health of elderly people.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Older people's mental health is embedded across adult mental health in the NHS Long Term Plan, including increased access to psychological therapies, community-based services for people with severe mental illnesses and crisis and liaison mental health care. We are aiming to invest at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year to expand and transform mental health services by 2023/24.

We are also providing an additional £110 million in this financial year to expand adult mental health services including psychological therapies, implementing the community mental health framework, investment in crisis services and maintaining the delivery of the 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines established earlier in the pandemic, as well as additional investment in suicide prevention programmes.

## ■ Neurology: Ealing

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[68384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are waiting for a neurology appointment in the Ealing CCG area.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* This information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ NHS

**Paul Bristow:**

[\[59086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to help ensure that the NHS has capacity to deal with future infection outbreaks and deliver routine elective surgery.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department continues to provide additional funding, drive innovation, and supporting the National Health Service to deliver both the recovery of elective services and deal with future infection outbreaks and wider pressures. It is however difficult to ensure there will be no disruptions during future infection outbreaks especially over winter.

Operational plans are in place to better manage emergency care demand and capacity. It includes the largest ever seasonal flu vaccination programme over winter, COVID-19 booster vaccines for priority groups to reduce infection risk and a 10-point plan for emergency care, which includes a range of actions across urgent, primary and community care.

To deliver elective services, the department has committed £2 billion this year to start to tackle backlogs and a further £8 billion across the following three years to increase elective activity and transform services, to improve productivity and expand capacity. At the Spending Review in October 2021, we also announced £5.9 billion capital investment to further support elective recovery, diagnostics, and technology over the next three years. This investment is key to increasing capacity and productivity.

As we have throughout this pandemic, we continue to work closely with independent sector to make the most effective use of the capacity and services available, including over winter and if needed during any future outbreaks.

## ■ NHS: Negligence

**John Redwood:**

[\[68981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much he has spent on NHS negligence claims over the last 12 months.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Resolution (NHSR) manages clinical negligence and other claims against the NHS in England.

NHSR has provided the following information:

The total cost of clinical negligence claims in the financial year 2020/21 was £2,209.3 million. The table below shows the breakdown of these costs:

COST	£ MILLION
Damages Paid to Claimants	£1609.8m
Claimant Legal Costs	£448.1m
NHS Legal Costs	£151.4m
TOTAL	£2209.3m

Note: the latest figures available from NHS Resolution relate to the 2020/21 financial year.

■ **NHS: Sexual Offences****Daisy Cooper:**[\[69196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of complaint and support information provided to patients who report sexual misconduct by NHS staff or staff of organisations delivering NHS services.

**Maria Caulfield:**

There are arrangements in place for patients to make a complaint about any aspect of the care, treatment or service they have received from the National Health Service. This is set out in the NHS Constitution and the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. Healthcare regulators are responsible for investigating concerns that are raised with them about regulated healthcare professionals.

If complainants need assistance, they can approach the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, which is available in most hospitals. Additionally, assistance can be provided by the independent NHS complaints advocacy service, which supports people who wish to make a complaint about their NHS care or treatment. There is also support in place for staff who wish to raise concerns about anything, including raising the issue with their Local Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, or contacting the Speak Up Direct service, which provides independent, confidential advice on speaking up matters.

**Daisy Cooper:**[\[69197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what obligations NHS organisations and organisations delivering NHS services currently have to document and

report on complaints of sexual misconduct and assault reported by patients and staff; and what opportunities exist for Parliamentary scrutiny of that data.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, all National Health Service organisations must prepare an annual report covering the number of complaints the organisation received, the subject matter of those complaints and details of what action has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of those complaints. NHS organisations must lay their annual report in Parliament.

■ **Oxygen: Storage**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[67102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the (a) quantities of medical oxygen and (b) number of units of portable gas cylinders used for transporting and administering medical oxygen that 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:**

[\[67103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the (a) quantities of medical oxygen and (b) number of units of portable gas cylinders used for transporting and administering medical oxygen 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:**

Reserves of medical oxygen and portable gas cylinders are held by gas producing organisations. The Department does not maintain or oversee stockpiles of these items.

■ **Patient Safety Commissioner**

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[66193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to report the findings of the consultation on the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 3 November 2021]:* The Government is developing its formal response to the consultation on the appointment and operation of the Patient Safety Commissioner and will publish in due course.

The Patient Safety Commissioner will be an important addition to the patient safety landscape, and an effective champion for patients. It is right that we take the necessary amount of time to reflect on the views of those who responded to the consultation, including patients, before publication.



**■ Smoking: Children**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[67199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help prevent children from taking up (a) smoking or (b) vaping.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[67200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that young people have access to comprehensive smoking cessation services.

**Maggie Throup:**

The current Tobacco Control Plan for England has an objective to reduce the number of 15 year olds who regularly smoke from 8% to 3% or less by the end of 2022. The latest available NHS Digital data from 2018 shows a prevalence of 5.3%. This data also shows that approximately 25% of 11 to 15 year olds had ever used an e-cigarette, but regular use of e-cigarettes (use at least once a week) remained low at 2% with occasional use (using an e-cigarette sometimes, but less than once a week) at around 4%.

Informing children about the dangers of smoking and vaping is part of the statutory health education curriculum. Local stop smoking services are available to anyone, including young people. We continue to monitor e-cigarette use and smoking among young people.

**■ Smoking: Newcastle upon Tyne**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:** [\[69583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the level of smoking in Newcastle upon Tyne.

**Maggie Throup:**

Local authorities are responsible for deciding the services required to meet the needs of their local populations, this includes stop smoking services and campaigns. In 2011 the adult smoking rates in the Newcastle upon Tyne area were 23% and in 2019 at 13%, below the current England average of 13.9%. The local authority is part of the collaboratively funded Fresh North East tobacco control programme, providing additional stop smoking campaigns and service support across the North East.

The Government is committed to making the country Smokefree by 2030 and will publish a new tobacco control plan to support this ambition which will have an even sharper focus on tackling health disparities.

**■ Sugar: Consumption**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[69128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Public Health England's 2020 report, Sugar reduction: progress report, 2015 to 2019, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the launch of the Office for Health Improvement

and Disparities on the expected publication date of the final report on the impact of the UK voluntary sugar reformulation programme; and if he will make a statement.

**Maggie Throup:**

The transfer of the voluntary reduction and reformulation programme from Public Health England to the Office of Health Promotion and Disparities means the expected publication date of the fourth progress report for the sugar reduction programme will be early in 2022.

■ **Test and Trace Support Payment**

**Steve Reed:**

**[67168]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish monthly figures on the amount paid by local authorities in England on the (a) Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and (b) discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment scheme since August 2020.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 4 November 2021]:* The UK Health Security Agency publishes the information requested as part of its weekly statistics release for NHS Test and Trace in England, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/weekly-statistics-for-nhs-test-and-trace-england-14-to-20-october-2021>

The data provides weekly information on the number of successful claims and amounts paid for both the main and discretionary elements of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme since its launch.

■ **Tobacco: Smuggling**

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

**[69581]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to fund regional programmes that reduce the use of illicit tobacco in deprived communities.

**Maggie Throup:**

Local authorities make funding decisions through the public health grant about the services needed to meet the needs of their populations and this includes stop smoking services and campaigns. Central funding is also provided to local authorities for local trading standards activity including illicit tobacco. Local authorities will decide how this is allocated across local services.

In addition, to reduce the availability of illicit tobacco in local communities the Government announced a package of measures at Budget 2020. This included investment to create a new UK-wide HMRC and Trading Standards intelligence sharing hub as well as a ring-fenced grant of £1 million to support National Trading Standards anti-illicit tobacco projects. This investment has commenced and is designed to provide tougher, more visible street level enforcement in those communities where illicit tobacco is a problem.

**■ Trading Standards: Electronic Cigarettes****Sir Graham Brady:** [\[68122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to provide additional funding for Trading Standards to help remove from the market disposable e-cigarettes that breach provisions of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016.

**Sir Graham Brady:** [\[68123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with Trading Standards on tackling non-compliant disposable e-cigarettes.

**Maggie Throup:**

E-cigarettes are regulated under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR). Local Trading Standards are responsible for the enforcement of these regulations. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities provides central funding to local authorities for local trading standards activity. It is for local decision making how this is allocated across services.

To support local enforcement of TRPR, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency are currently reviewing evidence and assisting in the identification of e-cigarette device seizures across the United Kingdom. It is working with various trading standards organisations, to correctly identify grey, black market and counterfeit devices entering illegally from foreign markets to UK distributors.

**■ Travel: Quarantine****Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[56516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 September 2021 to Question 51725 on Travel: Quarantine, what is the reason for the differing requirements for quarantine for those people vaccinated in the UK and those vaccinated overseas.

**Maggie Throup:**

Once within the United Kingdom, domestic self-isolation regulations apply. If an individual who was vaccinated outside of the UK is the contact of a positive case, they are not exempted from self-isolation. This is because there are no means of verifying their vaccination status as it is not recorded by the National Health Service.

**■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: Commonwealth****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[68130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with Commonwealth countries on their policy position ahead of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of the Parties (COP9).

**Maggie Throup:**

Officials from the Department's Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have met with officials from both the Australian and Canadian governments to discuss tobacco control matters, including the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of the Parties.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Alcoholic Drinks: Drugs****Catherine West:**[\[68390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Metropolitan Police on the rise of drink spiking cases in hospitality and entertainment venues.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The reports of the spiking of drinks with illegal substances, and of other attacks on individuals in nighttime venues, are of course concerning. This is an ongoing matter which the police are investigating. There are regular discussions with the police on this issue.

**■ Antisocial Behaviour****Robert Halfon:**[\[68221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle anti-social behaviour.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government is absolutely committed to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB). We know the serious impact that ASB has on both individuals and communities.

We provided the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to all forms of ASB through the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014*. These powers are deliberately local in nature, and it is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate in the specific circumstances of each individual case.

In January of this year, the Home Office updated [statutory guidance](#) to support local agencies to make effective use of these powers and in July the [Beating Crime Plan](#) laid out the Government's plan for tackling crime and ASB. This included a commitment to working with local agencies and partners to drive down ASB using the full range of powers and tools in the '2014 Act'.

In addition, the Home Office's Safer Streets Fund has allocated over £70m to support areas that are disproportionately affected by acquisitive crime. Many of the crime prevention measures supported by the fund, such as improved streetlighting and CCTV, are helping to tackle ASB.

**■ Arson: CCTV****Grahame Morris:**[\[69610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy that police forces are given an automatic right to access Fire and Rescue vehicle CCTV in order to facilitate the investigation of arson.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Whilst this is an operational matter, it is clearly important that police forces have access to recorded CCTV images for the prevention and detection of crime. Fire and rescue services are expected to support police forces in the prevention and detection of crime and are subject to collaborative duties in statute.

**■ Asylum: Applications****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[68400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to ensure that the processing of asylum seeker applications is timely and in accordance with the relevant guidance.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives to speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000, providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff. This investment in our people will speed up processing times and increase the throughput of asylum decisions.

We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making. Additionally, we have introduced specialist Decision Making Units, providing greater ownership and management of cohorts of asylum cases.

Asylum decision makers receive extensive mandatory training and mentoring on considering asylum claims. We have a robust quality assurance strategy in place to ensure asylum caseworkers meet the standard expected of them, and to ensure compliance with the published policy.

**■ Asylum: Housing****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[67184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the process is for a local authority to move an evacuated Afghan family from the hotel accommodation they have been placed in into a home that has been found by the local authority and meets the family's needs.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We are working at pace across government and with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation for Afghan families who were evacuated to the UK. The emergency circumstances of Operation Pitting meant that we were not able to secure long term accommodation for people as we would have liked before they flew to the UK.

Once properties are identified and referred to the Home Office, a matching exercise is undertaken which allows us to offer the property to a suitable family. Where possible, we will match families from local bridging hotels allowing them to remain in the area where they may have started to form connections and settle.

The local authority provide a formal occupancy date and arrangements are made to transport the family into their new home. The process of matching homes to families requires careful attention to detail but we are working to move people as quickly as possible when properties become available.

**■ Asylum: Temporary Accommodation****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[67181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy that children and families will not be accommodated in accommodation centres under either the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 or the provisions of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The New Plan for Immigration published by the Home Office on 24 March 2021 included plans to set up Reception Centres to provide basic accommodation for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute.

As part of these plans, consideration is being given to implementing some of the measures set out in the Nationality Immigration and Asylum 2002 Act which relate to supporting asylum seekers in accommodation centres. There are no plans, whether through measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill or other policy changes, to place people with children in these centres.

**■ Contact Tracing: Travel Requirements****Liam Byrne:**[\[64551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which Minister approved the catalogue of data collection fields on the UK Passenger Locator Form.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 3 November 2021]:* The Passenger Locator Form data capture field requirements are agreed by officials across government, predominately in health and transport departments to ensure alignment with Ministerial decisions on travel requirements and contact tracing strategy.

The Passenger Locator Form is a system for all four nations, so data fields are also included to align with requirements set by the devolved Administrations for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

## ■ Dentistry: Vacancies

**Dr Andrew Murrison:**

[\[68139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to add dentists to the shortage occupation list.

**Kevin Foster:**

The independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) last reviewed whether Dental Practitioners should be included on the SOL in 2019, and did not recommend doing so.

Dentists are an eligible occupation to be sponsored under the Skilled Worker route, subject to the rules and requirements of the route being met.

The main benefits of an occupation being on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) is a lower salary threshold and reduced visa fees. Dentists already receive these benefits through tradeable points and the Health and Care visa (which also exempts them from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge), so there would be little visible benefit in adding them to the SOL.

Following recommendations in their 2020 review the Government have agreed to review the SOL more regularly, the next review is expected to be in 2022. As with all SOL reviews, the MAC will launch a call for evidence and dental stakeholders will be able to provide their input to this process.

## ■ Domestic Violence

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[69162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to Women's Aid's estimate of September 2021 that at least £409 million is needed in 2022 to run specialist domestic abuse services across England, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding allocated to tackle domestic violence and abuse.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We recognise the important work Women's Aid and other such charities do in raising issues around support for victims of domestic abuse. The Home Office funds many such vital services, providing support to frontline services to victims and survivors, and the national domestic abuse helpline.

The Home Office has regular engagement with the sector in a multitude of forums, including regular dedicated stakeholder sessions. As part of this we use sector insight to understand their assessment of gaps in provision.

The Government set out its Budget and Spending Review plans in October of this year, including the high-level Home Office funding settlement for the next 3 years.



In order to deliver our ambition in the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, and complementary Domestic Abuse Strategy to be published later this year, we will take advantage of any multi-year Spending Review outcome to best fund specialist support services.

## ■ **Drugs: Organised Crime**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her strategy is for policing county lines gangs.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to allocate further resources to county lines policing.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This Government is determined to crack down on the county lines gangs who are exploiting our children and have a devastating impact on our communities. That is why we are investing a dedicated £40m this year to tackle drugs supply and county lines, bringing our total dedicated investment to over £65m since November 2019.

The £40m investment provided this financial year has allowed us to expand and build upon our successful County Lines Programme which, since launching in November 2019, has already seen more than 1,500 lines closed, over 7,400 arrests, £4.3 million in cash and significant quantities of drugs seized, and more than 4,000 vulnerable people safeguarded.

The Government has announced its intention to publish a Drugs Strategy by the end of this year which will set out our ambition to attack the drugs supply chain and further disrupt county lines. Decisions on future resourcing will be taken as part of Departmental allocations following the conclusion of the Spending Review.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to use diversion schemes and approaches to take people out of county lines involvement.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to work with other Cabinet colleagues to identify people vulnerable to county lines and ensure that pro-active steps are taken to prevent exploitation by county lines.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Education Secretary on the link between children excluded from schools and their engagement with county lines.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[69648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to integrate her Department's work on the safety of women and girls and their exploitation by county lines.

**Kit Malthouse:**

County lines gang activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities. That is why we launched our County Lines Programme in November 2019 with activity concentrated at targeting county line holders while appropriately safeguarding and supporting the vulnerable to exit their involvement.

This financial year we are providing up to £1m for specialist support to under 25s from London, the West Midlands and Merseyside who are criminally exploited through county lines, to help them safely reduce and exit their involvement, which includes supporting women and girls involved in this exploitation. We have also provided almost £400k of funding in 2021-22 for Young People's Advocates who provide one-to-one support to young women and girls at risk of or experiencing all forms of exploitation by gangs. In 2020/21 they supported over 800 young women and girls.

The Home Office works closely with the Department for Education as we recognise that engagement in education is a powerful protective factor against children's vulnerability and risk to involvement in county lines. The cross-Government Beating Crime Plan published in July this year (2021) announced an investment of over £45m in specialist support in both mainstream and Alternative Provision schools in serious violence hotspots to support young people at risk of involvement in violence to re-engage in education.

Finally, in July this year, the Government published a new and ambitious cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy that sets out our ambition to prioritise prevention, support survivors, pursue perpetrators and create a stronger system, with an objective of reducing prevalence.

## ■ Human Trafficking: France

**Andrew Percy:**

[\[68198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with her French counterpart on (a) preventing human traffickers operating in France sending migrants to the UK across the channel and (b) increasing security in the Port of Calais.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Home Secretary maintains regular contact with her French counterpart, Interior Minister Darmanin, on the issue of illegal migration and small boats crossings. They last met in person at the G7 Interior & Security Minister's meeting in September.

The UK and France maintain a longstanding relationship on tackling illegal migration at the shared border; the UK has committed several funding packages to supporting this work. Most recently, a bilateral funding arrangement was reached between the UK and France on 20 July 2021. Aspects of this funding are invested in infrastructure to increase border security at key border crossings points along the Channel coast and as a result Minister Darmanin has committed to stopping 100% of small boats crossing the Channel illegally.

## ■ Immigration: Feltham and Heston

**Seema Malhotra:**

[68283]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of EU settled status application pending in Feltham and Heston.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme in the 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics'.

Data on the number of applications and concluded applications by UK local authority are published in Tables EUSS\_LA\_01 and EUSS\_LA\_03 of the quarterly EUSS statistics local authority tables ([EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, June 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-june-2021)). The Feltham and Heston constituency is within Hounslow.

The latest published information shows 82,510 EU Settlement Scheme applications had been received up to 30 June 2021 from Hounslow. In the same period 75,500 applications had been concluded.

Figures to end of September 2021 will be published on 25 November 2021.

## ■ Nationality and Borders Bill

**Stuart C McDonald:**

[67179]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) meetings and (b) discussions her Department has had with the (i) Crown Prosecution Service, (ii) Lord Advocate/Procurator Fiscal Service and (iii) Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland on the Nationality and Borders Bill.

**Tom Pursglove:**

As is routine, the Home Office is in dialogue with these organisations on a variety of matters, and where relevant on the Nationality and Borders Bill.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[67240]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that the Nationality and Borders Bill is compliant with international law.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The Nationality and Borders Bill, which is part of our New Plan for Immigration, seeks to build a fair, but firm asylum and illegal migration system. The plan complies with international law.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[67241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the Nationality and Borders Bill's on victims of sex trafficking.

**Tom Pursglove:**

An Equality Impact Assessment For the Nationality and Borders Bill was published on 16 September, and this includes consideration of possible impacts on those who have been subject to sexual violence, sex-based violence or exploitation or trafficking for a sexual purpose. 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>.

**Police: Finance****Andrew Selous:**[\[67092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in which financial year will the revised police national funding formula take effect.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government has committed to reviewing the police funding formula before the next General Election and our intention is to introduce new arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

Reviewing the funding formula will be a complex process that will require close working with the policing sector and relevant experts to develop proposals, and a full public consultation will take place before any new funding arrangements are put in place.

**Police: Public Inquiries****Kate Osamor:**[\[67215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with the Metropolitan Police on the scope of the Government inquiry into issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens, announced on 5 October 2021.

**Kate Osamor:**[\[67216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government inquiry into issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens, announced on 5 October 2021, for what reason it is not her policy to hold a statutory inquiry.

**Kate Osamor:**[\[67217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government inquiry into issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens, announced

on 5 October 2021, for what reasons the scope of that inquiry is restricted to the abuse perpetrated by Wayne Couzens.

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[67218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government inquiry into issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens, announced on 5 October 2021, whether it is her policy that a panel will be appointed for that inquiry that includes at least one female expert in male violence against women and girls.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Home Secretary has announced a two part inquiry to investigate the issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens. Part one will examine Couzens' previous behaviour and establish a comprehensive account of his conduct leading up to his conviction, as well as any opportunities missed, drawing on the Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) investigations, once concluded.

Part two can look at any specific issues raised by the first part of the inquiry, which could include wider issues across policing – including but not limited to vetting practices, professional standards and discipline, and workplace behaviour. The final scope of the inquiry will be determined by the Chair once appointed, in consultation with other parties, including the Metropolitan Police Service as appropriate.

The Chair will be responsible for deciding if a panel should be appointed and who will be on it. Given the need to provide assurance as swiftly as possible, part 1 of the inquiry will be established as a non-statutory inquiry. A non-statutory inquiry allows for greater flexibility, can be tailored to the issues and is likely to be faster and less costly.

The government has amended regulations to make it clear that it can be a breach of professional standards, leading to a disciplinary sanction, if officers fail to co-operate with investigations and inquiries, when identified as a witness. The Home Secretary will retain the option to convert to a statutory inquiry if, in consultation with the Chair, it is determined that the inquiry cannot otherwise fulfil its functions.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Chris Grayling:**

[\[67080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate he has made of the number of Afghan Christians who have settled in the UK following the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan.

**Victoria Atkins:**

It is not possible to give an estimate of the number of Afghan Christians settled in the UK following the Taliban's return to power because details of an individual's religious beliefs are not routinely captured by the Home Office.

**Tim Farron:**

[\[67112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56158, on Immigration: Afghanistan, how many people

evacuated during Operation Pitting will be referred to the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The scheme is not yet open and remains under development. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

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)

**Tim Farron:**

[67113]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56158, on Immigration: Afghanistan, whether people evacuated during Operation Pitting who are subsequently referred to the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme will be granted refugee status.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The scheme is not yet open and remains under development. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

Those resettled through the ACRS will receive fee-free indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK, the right to work and immediate access to benefits if necessary. They will be able to apply for British citizenship after five years in the UK under existing rules and subject to the appropriate fee.

**Tim Farron:**

[67114]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 56158, on Immigration: Afghanistan, what entitlements to family reunion will people evacuated during Operation Pitting who are subsequently referred to the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme have.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The scheme is not yet open and remains under development. 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).

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[67185]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether special provisions will be made in cases where children pass their 18th birthdays while waiting for the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme to come into effect.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety. The scheme is not yet open and remains under development; however, we would anticipate that those resettled will include children within family units. Additionally, unaccompanied children in the region may be offered resettlement where it is determined that resettlement to the UK is in their best interests and they have been identified as eligible for the scheme.

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)

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[69604]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme scheme will re-open.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The scheme is not yet open and remains under development. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

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)

## ■ UK Visas and Immigration: Biometrics

**Naz Shah:**

**[68308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Windrush scandal, whether the Government has identified any risks associated with the use of the



Biometric Services Gateway system and its potential impact on communities around the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Biometrics Services Gateway (BSG) is a technological solution implemented by the Home Office Biometrics (HOB) Programme to provide a “common front door” into the legacy biometric systems and services.

The BSG facilitates the exchange of data between biometric systems and in doing so, supports a range of biometric business processes, such as visa enrolments, asylum applications and criminal police searches, by routing biometric data between and on behalf of the systems. The BSG 'front door' to HOB services:

- Reduces the complexity of the IT environment by introducing standards and common formats.
- Reduces the future cost of integration between HOB and other systems/services.
- Reduces ongoing run costs and increases system robustness, resilience and security of data

The BSG is one component of the HOB technical architecture and only sends data to the biometrics systems; it does not make decisions based on the biometric data.

■ **Visas: Afghanistan**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[67195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 58941 on Visas: Afghanistan, how many applications for visas to the UK have been made by Afghan nationals in each month of 2021, by type of visa; and what the cost in fees is of each of those types of visa.

**Kevin Foster:**

Home Office Migration Statistics do not specifically capture the information on how many Afghan nationals have been processed. Data on the number of applications received up to June 2021 can be accessed at: [Migration statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/migration-statistics)

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found at immigration - Research and statistics - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

In terms of visa fees; Fees are set taking account of the charging powers provided by Section 68(9) of the Immigration Act 2014, which include the ability to set fees based on: the cost of processing the application, the benefits and entitlements provided by a successful application and the wider cost of the migration and borders system. Full details of which can be reviewed via the following link - [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68)

The Home Office keeps fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensures they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament

## ■ Visas: Married People

**Naz Shah:**

[\[69106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to change the minimum income and adequate maintenance requirement for the spouse visa in response to the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on income and employment.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Minimum Income Requirement is set at the level which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration. We remain committed to those aims.

We recognised the economic impacts of COVID-19 on earnings and made relevant concessionary adjustments in order to support those affected between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. There are, however, no plans to change the minimum income and adequate maintenance requirement at this time.

**Naz Shah:**

[\[69108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to grant an extension to the changes made to the minimum income and adequate maintenance requirement for a spouse visa after the 31 October 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Minimum Income Requirement is set at the level which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration. We remain committed to those aims.

We recognised the economic impacts of COVID-19 on earnings and made relevant concessionary adjustments in order to support those affected between 1 March 2020 and 31 October 2021. There are, however, no plans to change the minimum income and adequate maintenance requirement at this time.

## ■ Visas: Sudan

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[63700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of expediting visa applications for Sudanese nationals in response to the political and security situation in that country.

**Kevin Foster:**

Individual applications raised which include a compassionate or compelling element will be considered on a case by case basis and may be expedited.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

## ■ House of Commons: Income

**Harriett Baldwin:** [68248]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the effect of trends in the number of visitors to the Parliamentary estate since the lifting of national covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021 on (a) catering and (b) hospitality revenues on the estate.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

The Houses visitor systems do not currently capture the difference between visitors on House business or other, and as such this information is not available.

**Julian Knight:** [68318]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment has the House of Commons Commission made of the impact of reduced visitor numbers to the parliamentary estate due to covid-19 restrictions on the House of Commons' finances.

**Nicola Richards:** [68485]

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the House of Commons Commission has made of the impact of reduced visitor numbers to the parliamentary estate due to covid-19 restrictions on the House of Commons' finances.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

In 2020/21 the closure of the estate to visitors, along with the much-reduced number of people working onsite, significantly affected income. In 2020/21 income from tours reduced by £2.4 million. Many tours staff were reassigned to other roles so there was no clear offsetting saving. The impact on catering and retail was a net increase in costs of £4.6 million (catering) and £0.85 million (retail). With no education visits spending on the transport subsidy for schools was reduced by £0.6m.

FINANCIAL YEAR	HOC INCOME FROM PAID-FOR TOURS (£M)
2018–19 (a)	1.9
2019–20 (a)	2.1
2020–21 (b)	*0.0

(a) Taken from [House of Commons Administration Annual Report and Accounts for 2019–20](#).

(b) Taken from [House of Commons Administration Annual Report and Accounts for 2020–21](#). See below for explanation of the figure.

*\*The House of Commons had budgeted to receive £2.4 million in income from tours in 2020–21 but, in the event, there was no income because tours were cancelled. It is important to note that this is income foregone, which is not the same as a net loss. (We noted on page 27 of the accounts that the loss in income is a gross figure; many tours staff were reassigned to other roles so there was no clear offsetting saving.)*

In 2021 commercial tours, along with public access to retail and catering outlets, restarted over the summer. Income and expenditure in these areas continue to be closely monitored, as with all House of Commons 2021/22 budgets.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[68157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when the UK will join The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

On 28<sup>th</sup> September, the UK took the next step on the pathway to membership of this important and growing trading group, kicking off the first round of talks with officials from all Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) member countries. This has been followed by technical discussions on a range of areas including e-commerce and procurement. The UK has an ambitious timeline for UK accession to CPTPP and hopes to conclude negotiations by the end of 2022.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Administration of Justice: Access

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[904111\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Attorney General on the effect of CPS administrative finalisation on access to justice.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Secretary of State spoke to the Attorney General last month about the work underway to improve the quality of case files and evidence issues. We welcome the work the police and CPS are doing to improve case file quality, which will reduce the number of cases that are administratively finalised.

Victims must have the help they need which is why we are boosting funding for support services by 85 percent. This will fund over 1,000 Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors and other services including crisis helplines.

At the same time our Rape Action Plan is driving the wholesale changes needed to tackle this horrific crime and restore faith in the justice system.

## ■ Criminal Proceedings: Newport West

**Ruth Jones:** [\[67258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps he has taken to increase public confidence in the criminal justice system in Newport West constituency.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The overall changes we are making to improve the criminal justice system are designed to give all communities increased confidence. This includes recruiting 20,000 extra police officers, improving handovers between agencies, and addressing the backlog through our Court Recovery Plan. We are increasing the transparency of the Criminal Justice System by publishing quarterly scorecards detailing national and regional performance. In Wales, the Criminal Justice In Wales Board has brought together key partners to drive forward the recovery effort, prioritising the needs of victims and witnesses, the needs of those who have offended, early intervention and prevention and race equality in Wales.

## ■ Legal Aid Scheme: Reviews

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[904106\]](#)

When the Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid will publish its recommendations.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review follows on from the introduction of the 'accelerated measures' which injected up to £51m per annum into the criminal legal aid system in September 2020.

Sir Christopher Bellamy QC is leading the review, which I understand he is close to completing. I can confirm the Government will publish Sir Christopher's report together with its response as soon as possible.

## ■ Offences against Children: Victims

**Nadia Whittome:** [\[67322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many child victims of sexual abuse reached the age of 18 before their case was heard; and how many of those people were then cross examined in each year from 2016.

**Tom Pursglove:**

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The age of victims throughout the progression of a case through the Criminal Justice System and the number that were cross examined is not held centrally.

## ■ Sexual Offences: Sentencing

**Robbie Moore:** [\[904110\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Sentencing Council on sentencing guidelines for violent and sexual offences.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Secretary of State meets with the Chairman of the Sentencing Council periodically to discuss a range of relevant matters, and has a representative attend Council meetings.

The Council has issued sentencing guidelines for a wide range of violent and sexual offences. While the Council is independent of Government, it is required to consult the Lord Chancellor on guideline development.

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Building Safety Fund****Hilary Benn:****[67066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether a building that has received funding from the Building Safety Fund can make a further application to that fund if additional information comes to light about other unsafe cladding, for example through a BS8414 test.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The requirements for Building Safety Fund eligibility, against which registrations are assessed, are set out in Prospectus Annex A: Technical Information of the Building Safety Fund Prospectus, available at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund). If registrants feel that the original decision reached on their building needs to be reassessed in light of new information, an appeal form is available on the Building Safety Fund page on gov.uk.

**■ Building Safety Fund: Leeds****Hilary Benn:****[67064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2021 to Question 35504 on Building Safety Fund: Leeds, what the public safety grounds are for not listing buildings with unsafe cladding asked for in that Question.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As set out in my answer to Question UIN 35504 on 22 July 2021, the position of the Government is not to reveal the identity of high-rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding system. We need to be careful not to expose residents to greater risk on safety grounds such as from the risk of arson, and respect that some residents may prefer that their building with unsafe cladding is not publicly identified. However, we recognise that some buildings may have already been identified by others and are already in the public domain.

**■ Buildings: Fire Prevention****Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[67182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what provisions are in plans to help ensure minimum disruption for residents in buildings where fire safety remediation is potentially being carried out on two parallel tracks to fix defects that are (a) covered by the Building Safety Fund and (b) beyond the remit of that fund.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Building owners are responsible for the safety of their building, including keeping residents informed of any building safety work they are undertaking and for ensuring that any disruption to residents is minimised. Likewise building owners, or their representatives, are also responsible for the planning and delivery of the remediation of unsafe cladding being funded by the Building Safety Fund. As part of the funding application building owners must inform residents of the nature of the works they intend to carry out and provide them with regular updates on the progress of the remediation and they must ensure remediation projects follow best industry practice.

**■ Children: Disability****Mary Kelly Foy:** [\[R\] \[69700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what proportion of the £4.8 billion in new local authority grants, announced at the Spending Review on 27 October 2021, will be used to address the £573 million funding gap in disabled children's social care identified by the Disabled Children's Partnership and Scope's October 2021 report, The Gap Widens.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is providing around £1.6 billion additional grant to local authorities in each year over the Spending Review period. In addition, local authorities can expect rising income from local taxation. This will allow councils to increase their spending on the vital public services they provide, such as children's social care, and will ensure those services can respond effectively to rising demand and cost pressures.

More detail on how the funding announced at the Spending Review will be distributed will be given as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement. The department believes it is right for local authorities, who know their areas' needs best, to make decisions about the allocation of funding within their local areas.

**■ Coal: Cumbria****Catherine West:** [\[67221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in the context of COP26, whether a decision has been made on the proposal to build a coal mine in Cumbria; and if he will make statement.



**Christopher Pincher:**

A public inquiry examining the proposal for a new coking coal mine in Cumbria took place in September and October. Following the close of that inquiry, the independent planning Inspector is preparing a report for Ministers to consider.

**Council Tax: Hendon****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[67128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate his Department has made of the average amount people in Hendon constituency will pay for Band D Council Tax in the 2022-23 financial year.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Council tax levels are set by local authorities, although the Secretary of State determines referendum principles to ensure that residents can have the final say over excessive increases. The provisional local government finance settlement will set out full details of the proposed referendum principles for 2022-23. The settlement and referendum principles will be subject to agreement by Parliament in the usual way.

**Disability: Elections****Jim Shannon:**[\[67152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what local support will be made available to help disabled people to access photo ID for electoral purposes.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

It is integral to our democracy that everybody is able to make their voice heard and that elections are accessible for all those eligible to vote.

The Government is committed to protecting the integrity of our democracy by introducing a requirement to show identification to vote at polling stations. Stealing someone's vote is stealing their voice. Voter fraud is a crime that we cannot allow room for and we must stamp out any potential for it to take place in elections. A broad range of documents will be accepted and any eligible voter who does not have one of the required forms of photographic identification, will be able to apply for a free, local Voter Card from their local authority.

**Disadvantaged****Rachael Maskell:**[\[67325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of deprivation disparities within a locality.

**Neil O'Brien:**

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England. The most recent iteration of the English indices of deprivation was published in September 2019 and all resources are available online here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019> . Data on deprivation disparities is available at a range of geographical and spatial scales from this webpage. The Department will consider an update in due course.

## ■ Gaming Machines: Non-domestic Rates

**Scott Benton:**

[67288]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether guidance for the forthcoming £1.5bn business rates relief fund for previously excluded sectors will include a specific reference to the amusement machine industry supply chain as a sector which is eligible for support.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The £1.5 billion fund will be allocated to local authorities based on the stock of properties in the area whose sectors have been affected by COVID-19 and are ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. My Department will publish guidance to help local authorities set up their local schemes once the legislation relating to COVID-19 Material Change of Circumstances provisions has passed.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[67183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in the context of remediation of fire safety defects in towerblocks, whether exemptions are possible for wooden balconies in the event that they have been treated with fire retardant material.

**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 balconies including building height, balcony arrangement and location as well as 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.

In April 2020, the Government published the workplan for the technical review of the statutory guidance to the Building Regulations with regards to fire safety (Approved Document B). We have commissioned research for this fundamental review which will address key fire safety issues. We have already started research on balcony spandrels and laminated glass, construction technologies and design, compartmentation and fire resistance, and other important topics. Details of the technical review are set out here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/877365/Technical\\_review\\_of\\_Approved\\_Document\\_B\\_workplan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877365/Technical_review_of_Approved_Document_B_workplan.pdf)

The Technical Review will provide us a robust evidence base to make any future policy decisions.

## ■ Planning Permission

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[67270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 23 September 2021 to Question 50144, on Planning Permission, if he will urgently issue guidance on determining appeals to the Planning Inspector that a greater weighting should be attached to the National Planning Policy Framework's objective to protect greenbelt land than to the standard housing need methodology calculation in the event that a local authority does not have a Local Plan in place.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework already sets out that where plan policies are out of date, an application may be refused where our national policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance, such as Green Belt, provide a clear reason for doing so.

The Government is firmly committed to protecting and enhancing Green Belt land for future generations as set out in our manifesto. That is why, for decision-taking, local authorities should regard the construction of buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate and refuse planning permission, unless there are exceptional circumstances as determined by the local authority.

Each application is judged on its own individual merit and the weight attached to a particular consideration is a matter of judgment for the local authority as the decision-maker in the first instance.

## ■ Planning Permission: Carbon Emissions

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that planning decisions contribute to halving the UK's carbon emissions by 2030.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[69144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that COP26 outcomes are reflected in future planning policy.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities are considering how the planning system can further support our commitment to reaching net zero. As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, we will make sure that the reformed planning system supports our efforts to combat climate change and help bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. As part of our programme of planning reform we intend to review the National Planning Policy Framework to make sure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible.

We will of course consider outcomes of the vital COP26 conference in informing decisions on how we expect the planning system to operate.

## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[67326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to publish detailed guidelines for local authorities on support for relatives of British nationals to be evacuated from Afghanistan under the forthcoming Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We recognise the vulnerability of this group and as such, British Nationals are currently being accommodated in bridging accommodation in the same way as arrivals on the ARAP and ACRS programmes. They are also able to access Universal Credit, with financial support available until this is set up for them. DLUHC is working closely with the Home Office on this and a range of issues. Further details will be announced in due course.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development

**Dan Jarvis:**

[R] [69623]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the oral Answer of the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury on 2 November 2021, Official Report, column 744, when the second round of Levelling Up Fund bids will open.

**Neil O'Brien:**

Round 2 of The Levelling Up Fund will open in spring 2022. Where bids have been unsuccessful, we would encourage bidders to reapply in round two.

Further information on how future rounds of the Fund will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out in due course.

**TRANSPORT****■ Aviation: Freight**

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of future GDP growth on air freight tonnage for (a) imports into and (b) exports from the UK.

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of new trade deals on the import and export volumes that will require air freight transportation.

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of internet sales on demand for air freight services.

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what modelling his Department has made of levels of future air freight volumes to and from the UK up to 2050.

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the annual tonnage of air freight that is (a) trucked from the UK to EU airports for onward carriage by air and (b) flown into EU airports and then trucked onwards into the UK.

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the air freight capacity available at (a) Heathrow (b) Stansted and (c) East Midlands airports.

**Sir Roger Gale:** [\[68990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of UK airfreight infrastructure required to accommodate (a) dedicated freighter aircraft using UK runway capacity, (b) belly freight on passenger aircraft served by existing UK airports and (c) airfreight trucked to or from EU airports.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department actively monitors the passage of air freight in and out of the UK and engages regularly with industry including airlines, airports and ground handling companies.

The Government recognises the vital role air freight plays in supply chains by ensuring that essential goods can continue to be brought into and out of the UK without disruption. The sector is highly resilient and exclusively private. In 2017 air freight contributed £7.2 billion to the UK economy.

## ■ Birmingham-Shrewsbury Railway Line

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

**[69595]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Rails to Recovery report into improvements on the Shrewsbury-Black Country-Birmingham line.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

I am grateful to Midlands Connect for producing this report, which provides useful insight into the case for, and potential benefits of, enhancing the line between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.

As noted in the report, a Strategic Outline Business Case is the next stage, which I hope to receive from Midlands Connect this winter.

## ■ Driving Licences: Applications

**Mark Menzies:**

**[67125]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to help improve the processing of driving licence (a) new and (b) renewal applications.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days. However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application for a driving licence. The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found [here](#).

The DVLA has introduced additional online services, recruited more staff and has secured extra office space in Swansea and Birmingham to house more staff to help reduce waiting times while providing future resilience and business continuity.

The DVLA understands the impact that delays can have on people's everyday lives and is working as quickly as possible to process paper applications and return people's documentation to them.

## ■ Driving Tests: Waiting Lists

**Emma Hardy:**

**[68406]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help support the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to address the driving test backlog.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has put in place a number of measures to increase practical driving tests. These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and

conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays). The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners.

#### ■ **Fawley-Totton Railway Line**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[69668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department undertook a cost-benefit analysis of the restoration of the Fawley, Hythe, Totten railway line.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[69671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has a (a) planned completion date and (b) timeline of interim completion targets for the restoration of the Fawley, Hythe, Totten railway line.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Restoring Your Railway Totton-Fawley (Waterside Line) is an early-stage project progressing from the 'Ideas Fund'. The project is progressing into further development following assessment of Hampshire County Council's Strategic Outline Business Case. The next phase of development will work through the potential for delivery in detail including timescales and an assessment of costs and benefits to determine next steps.

#### ■ **M11: Finance**

**Robert Halfon:** [\[68216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding the Government has provided to new M11 junction 7a.

**Robert Halfon:** [\[68219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce traffic accidents on the M11 between junction 6 and junction 8.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Safety is the Department and National Highways' main priority on all sections of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), comprised of England's motorways and principal A-roads, including the M11 between junctions 6 and 8.

National Highways routinely monitors the M11, and accidents are analysed to understand cause and identify trends. National Highways completed several maintenance and improvement schemes since its 2018 accident study on the this stretch. These have improved the road surface, drainage and road markings.

National Highways has also contributed financially to the building of the new junction 7a by Essex County Council. The new junction will not only support growth around the Harlow constituency, but will improve the safety of those driving between Harlow and the M11.

Pursuant to the answer to Question 151672, total project costs for this scheme, including construction and widening of local link roads, is estimated to be around £81



million, with an agreed funding contribution from National Highways of £41.7 million which was provided to Essex County Council. Additionally, through the Department's Large Local Majors programme, the scheme received £1.5 million of early development funding in 2017. The remainder of the project costs are being funded by Essex County Council and partners.

#### ■ **Railway Stations: Cullompton**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[69669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department undertook a cost-benefit analysis of the restoration of Cullompton train station.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[69670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department undertook a cost-benefit analysis of the potential merits of the restoration of Wellington train station.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Restoring Your Railway Wellington and Cullompton station scheme is an early-stage project progressing from the 'Ideas Fund'. The project is progressing into further development following assessment of Somerset West and Taunton Council and Mid Devon District Council's Strategic Outline Business Case. The next phase of development will work through the potential for delivery in detail including an assessment of costs and benefits to determine next steps.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[69672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has a planned completion date for the restoration of Cullompton train station.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[69673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has a planned completion date for the restoration of Wellington train station.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Restoring Your Railway Wellington and Cullompton station scheme is an early-stage project progressing from the 'Ideas Fund'. The project is progressing into further development following assessment of Somerset West and Taunton Council and Mid Devon District Council's Strategic Outline Business Case. The next phase of development will work through the potential for delivery in detail including timescales to determine next steps.

#### ■ **Railway Stations: Visual Impairment**

**Kate Hollern:** [\[70272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the National Disability Strategy, what progress his Department has made with Network Rail in accelerating the upgrade of rail station platforms with tactile paving.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Network Rail has received an initial £10 million to install tactile paving at priority stations not already funded. I will make further announcements on future rounds of funding in due course.

**Railways: Finance****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[69676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has for the allocation of the £46 billion pledged to rail in the Autumn Budget 2021; what his timeline is for the allocation of that funding; and how much of that funding has already been pledged, by project.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Spending Review (SR) settlement sees continued record levels of investment in rail enhancements across England and Wales, with increased budgets from 2022-23 to 2024-25.

The SR 21 settlement enables us to continue to deliver ambitious improvements, including the Transpennine Route Upgrade, restoring lines closed during the Beeching cuts and HS2, as we level up our country and build back better.

We will continue to manage Network Rail delivered rail enhancements within the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP), as a portfolio, in line with the RNEP policy. We will set out our ongoing plans for rail enhancements in due course.

**Roads: Construction****Rachael Maskell:**[\[68360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of funding for new road building projects with the Government's net zero target.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department published its Transport Decarbonisation Plan in July 2021, setting transport on the path to net zero by 2050. National Highways' support this through its own Net Zero Highways Plan which sets out how it will achieve net zero for its own operations by 2030, for road maintenance and construction by 2040, and net zero carbon travel on our roads by 2050.

A net zero Britain will still travel by road in 2050 and investment in Britain's roads will support a thriving net zero economy.

**Roads: Repairs and Maintenance****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[68232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate has the Department made of the lowest carbon option for road resurfacing.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Innovation in design and construction techniques and materials is key to achieving their net-zero carbon ambition for construction. National highways expect to publish its Net Zero Strategy and Plan during 2021/22.

On local roads it is for each individual local highway authority to assess which parts of its network need repair and what standards should be applied.

The Department is funding three projects specifically aimed at reducing carbon by the use of sustainable materials and energy reduction via the Live Labs programme.

**■ Ryanair: Fares****Ruth Jones:**[\[68456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Ryanair's plans to reduce fares in Winter 2021 on the Government's progress to meet its net zero target.

**Robert Courts:**

The UK has a legal obligation to achieve net zero across the whole economy by 2050 and the aviation sector will need to meet this target irrespective of any changes to fares.

In July we published our Jet Zero Consultation which set out our vision for the aviation sector to reach net zero by 2050, through the rapid development of technologies in a way that maintains the benefits of air travel and maximises the opportunities that decarbonisation can bring for the UK.

In the consultation we proposed setting a net zero trajectory from 2025 to 2050 with interim targets for the sector, and consulted on reviewing progress on the sector's progress and updating the strategy where necessary, every five years.

Officials are currently considering consultation responses, with an aim to publish the final Jet Zero Strategy in early 2022.

As commercial operators, airlines select their routes and set their fare structures according to market demand and other factors. As an airline licensed to operate commercial flights in the UK, Ryanair do not require individual permissions from the Government to operate specific routes and make their own decisions about ticket prices and therefore it would be inappropriate for the Government to intervene.

**■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions****Bob Blackman:**[\[68228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the £300 million investment identified in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 for the extension of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition and HGV technology trials will be made available specifically to the maritime sector.

**Robert Courts:**

DfT received £300m for R&D initiatives to help commercialise low and zero emission technologies. The Department will shortly commence a prioritisation process to allocate this funding across different programmes, including maritime. The outcome will be shared in due course.

**Emma Hardy:**[\[68407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the £300 million in funding announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 for the extension of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition and HGV technology trials will be made available specifically to the maritime sector.

**Robert Courts:**

DfT received £300m for R&D initiatives to help commercialise low and zero emission technologies. The Department will shortly commence a prioritisation process to allocate this funding across different programmes, including maritime. The outcome will be shared in due course.

**TREASURY****■ Azure Services: Loans****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[67231\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision by Barclays Partner Finance to refund loans issued between April 2014 and April 2016 by defunct timeshare operator Azure Services Ltd.

**John Glen:**

The Government is aware of the decision by Barclays Partner Finance to refund loans issued between April 2014 and April 2016 by Azure Services Ltd. The Government is also aware of a campaign for other consumers to receive compensation for loans outside the April 2014 – April 2016 period. Any potential broader policy implications of this decision will primarily be for the Financial Conduct Authority, given their responsibility for the regulation of consumer credit, which operates independently of government.

**■ Bank Services****Chi Onwurah:**[\[68264\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Conduct and Markets Authority on the (a) findings and (b) implications for open banking and consumer trust of the Open Banking Limited Independent Investigation report, published on 1 October 2021.

**John Glen:**

The recent independent investigation led by Alison White raised significant issues around the governance and operations of the Open Banking Implementation Entity (OBIE). The Government welcomes the steps being taken by the Competition and Markets Authority and the new OBIE Chair and Trustee, Charlotte Crosswell, to address these issues.

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

**Boats: Non-domestic Rates****Bob Blackman:****[69614]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the business rate cut for retail, leisure and hospitality sectors announced in the Budget applies to the leisure marine industry.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Guidance setting out eligibility for the 2022-23 retail, hospitality and leisure relief will be published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in due course.

**Business: Loans****Kate Osborne:****[69209]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to review the bank referral scheme and increase the (a) diversity of lending options and (b) availability of constructive support for rejected businesses.

**John Glen:**

The Government published a statutory Post-Implementation Review of the Bank Referral Scheme in December 2020, which is available here:

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1946/pdfs/uksiod\\_20151946\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1946/pdfs/uksiod_20151946_en.pdf).

The Government remains committed to fostering a strong, diverse and competitive financial services sector to ensure that UK SMEs can benefit from high quality products and services at efficient prices. That said, I should be clear that after SMEs are referred to alternative lenders under the Bank Referral Scheme, the decision of whether to offer finance is at the discretion of each lender, subject to their commercial considerations.

Furthermore, the Government recognises the vital role that alternative lenders have played in the provision of credit to SMEs and is grateful for the way the sector has responded to the current crisis. It remains committed to promoting competition, and widening the funding options available to UK businesses, and as such, we will continue to review our policies and work with the sector to achieve those outcomes.

## ■ Children: Poverty

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[69126]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of children in the UK who live in a household in debt in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Government does not hold this information.

The Government carefully monitors trends in household finances in order to inform policy making to help people manage their money well, encourage them to save, and access support if they need to get their finances back on track. It does so by working closely with the [Money and Pensions Service](#) (MaPS), the Financial Conduct Authority ( [FCA](#) ) and engages regularly with a range of other stakeholders on their research and findings.

The FCA conducts a biennial Financial Lives Survey of 16,000 adults which provides a comprehensive insight into the finances of the [UK](#) population. The latest findings from the survey were published in February 2021. MaPS monitor financial difficulty through an annual survey of 22,000 people. MaPS will publish the results of the 2021 Debt Need Survey early next year.

## ■ Community Development Finance Institutions

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[69147]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support his Department plans to provide to community development finance institutions across the UK.

**John Glen:**

The Treasury recognises the vital role that non-banks, including Community Development Financial institutions (CDFIs), play in the provision of credit to SMEs. It remains grateful for the way the sector has responded to the current crisis. The Government remains committed to promoting competition and widening the funding options available to UK businesses.

Our position has always been that the Government does not provide capital to financial institutions, who must source their own funding. For those lenders accredited under the government-backed Recovery Loan Scheme, it is worth noting that they can benefit from the transfer and assignment of the guarantee. The government made this allowance in response to a request from alternative lenders support their ability to access funding.

## ■ Companies and Financial Services: Carbon Emissions

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[69212]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the conditions of the mandate to become net-zero that he plans to impose on UK companies and financial services.

**John Glen:**

The Government has set legally binding net zero targets under the Climate Change Act and has committed to making the UK the best place in the world for green finance.

The recently published report: 'Greening Finance: A Roadmap to Sustainable Investing' sets out how the Government will achieve this, focusing on the first step: ensuring that every financial decision maker has the information needed to take climate and the environment into account with new world-leading Sustainability Disclosure Requirements.

Detailed, credible transition plans that are integrated with other disclosures and incorporate interim milestones and targets, can support markets in monitoring progress towards a net-zero economy. They are also essential for the effective exercise of market discipline, and investors' ability to hold investee company boards and management to account.

The government therefore expects to see the publication of transition plans become the norm across the economy and the Chancellor announced at COP26 that the UK will move towards making publication of transition plans mandatory.

To help deliver this, the Government will set up a high-level Transition Planning Taskforce. This will bring together a range of stakeholders to develop a 'gold standard' for transition plans, coordinating with international efforts under the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero and others, and reporting by the end of 2022.

As standards for transition plans emerge, the Government and regulators will take steps to incorporate these into the UK's Sustainability Disclosure Requirements and strengthen regulation to encourage consistency in published plans and increased adoption by 2023.

**■ Electronic Funds Transfer: Fraud****Chi Onwurah:****[68263]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Payment Systems Regulator on potential improvements to reimbursement rates for victims of authorised push payment scams.

**John Glen:**

The Government is committed to tackling fraud and ensuring that victims of Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams are protected.

As set out in its Response to the Payments Landscape Review: Call for Evidence, the Government's view is that the introduction of Faster Payments rules setting reimbursement and liability requirements on all scheme participants, alongside preventative measures, is the best possible solution to the issue of APP scams. The Payment Systems Regulator's (PSR) call for views has now closed, and the Government is engaging with the PSR and industry on next steps, including



considering what further actions may be necessary to make urgent progress on this issue.

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

### ■ **Equitable Life Assurance Society: Payments**

**Kim Johnson:**

**[67299]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will ensure that, following the upcoming expiration of his Department's contract with Capita for the administration of the Equitable Life Payments Scheme, that future awardees of the contract will be subject to the same contractual requirement to hold, in a searchable format, the personal, bank account and payment data for all non-With Profits Annuitants Equitable Life policyholders, who have already received a payment from the Scheme.

**John Glen:**

HM Treasury has extended its contract with Capita for the administration of the Equitable Life Payment Scheme until 15 November 2023. The service requirements will naturally be reviewed when the service is re-procured.

The contract is published on the Contracts Finder website and is available at the following link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/961dcde2-82d8-4f6b-9ecc-b5c1581b03d9?p=@8=UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT0>

### ■ **Gold and Foreign Exchange Reserves: Interest Rates**

**Liam Byrne:**

**[67073]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average annual interest was on the UK's foreign reserves in each of the last 10 years.

**Liam Byrne:**

**[67074]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average rate of return on the Government's holdings of (a) special drawing rights and (b) foreign exchange holdings in each of the last 10 years.

**John Glen:**

Information is not held in the form requested and could only be produced at a disproportionate cost due to the complexities of the analysis required.

The Exchange Equalisation Account (EEA) Annual Report and Accounts contains information on the financial position of the Government's foreign exchange holdings,

including the income and asset position. Details of the interest rate on special drawing rights is published by the IMF on a weekly basis. Rates of return may therefore be estimated with reference to this published information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-central-funds#exchange-equalisation-account>

<https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/14/51/Special-Drawing-Right-SDR>

## ■ Gold and Foreign Exchange Reserves: Sales

**Liam Byrne:** [\[67072\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the public sector net debt of selling existing foreign currency reserves.

**Liam Byrne:** [\[67075\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of selling existing foreign currency reserves for the Government's public sector net debt; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

There has been no assessment made of the effects of selling existing foreign currency reserves.

The reserves have a clearly defined function as set out in the Exchange Equalisation Account (EEA) Act 1979. The foreign exchange reserves are held on a precautionary basis in the event of any unexpected shocks and are also used to provide foreign currency services for government departments, and to carry out the UK's obligations under its membership of the IMF.

The Chancellor set out new fiscal rules at Budget, and the OBR has confirmed we are on track to see debt falling by 2024-25, and to meet all our fiscal rules.

## ■ Housing: Prices

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[68467\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October 2021 to Question 63907, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the Lifetime ISA limit so that it reflects property prices in different localities.

**John Glen:**

The Lifetime ISA is intended to support younger people saving for their first home or for later life by offering a generous government bonus of 25% on up to £4,000 of savings each year. These funds, including the government bonus, can be used to purchase a first home up to the value of £450,000.

The Government considers that the £450,000 price cap is suitable to support the majority of first-time buyers across the UK, who typically purchase less expensive properties than other buyers.

The most recent Office for Budget Responsibility forecast stated that bonus payments will have an exchequer cost of £3.7 billion between 2021 and 2027. The UK-wide price cap ensures that this significant investment of public money is more precisely targeted towards households that may find it more difficult to get onto the property ladder.

First-time buyers who can purchase a home valued over £450,000 are likely to have an income significantly above that of the average household in the UK and are therefore more likely to be able to purchase a first home without the support of this scheme.

However, the Government keeps all aspects of savings policy under review.

## ■ Liverpool Victoria

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[69573\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with the Financial Conduct Authority and the Bank of England on the monitoring of the voting process in the proposed demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria to ensure that that voting process is effective and transparent; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[69574\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with the Financial Conduct Authority to help ensure that no-one who is entitled to vote in the ballot to decide whether Liverpool Victoria (LV) should be demutualised or not is inadvertently excluded; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[69575\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the names of the future board of Liverpool Victoria (LV) in the event that the proposed demutualisation and sale to Bain Capital is successfully completed; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The assessment and approval of the proposed sale and demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria is an ongoing and independent process, overseen and scrutinised by the financial services regulators, and subject to approval by the Courts. It is not appropriate for the Government to intervene in an ongoing and independent process.

It is not the Government's role to publish the names of future board members. It is a matter for the firm to decide on whether it publicly announces the new board members prior to regulatory approval. In due course, if and when these individuals are approved under the Senior Managers and Certification Regime, it will be searchable on The Financial Services register via the FCA's website.

## ■ Ministerial Boxes

**Luke Pollard:** [\[69694\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the green ministerial box cost that he used as a prop for a photoshoot at COP26; what budget the funding came from to pay for the box; and what plans he has for reusing the box.

**Helen Whately:**

The green briefcase was made available to the Chancellor by an official COP26 sponsor as part of COP26 Finance Day.

## ■ Non-domestic Rates: Tax Allowances

**Scott Benton:** [\[67287\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to increase the cap on the 50 per cent reduction in business rates for the retail, leisure and hospitality sector to support businesses with larger numbers of sites.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Together with Small Business Rates Relief, over 90 per cent of retail, hospitality and leisure businesses will receive at least a 50 per cent reduction in their business rates bills in 2022-23.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[68374\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the 50 per cent business rates relief discount will be available per business or per premise.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties in England will receive up to 50 per cent off their business rates bill in 2022-23, subject to a £110,000 cash cap per business.

## ■ Public Expenditure: Scotland

**Ian Murray:** [\[69608\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Barnett consequential funds are from the Autumn Budget 2021, by (a) revenue and (b) capital expenditure.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Autumn Budget 2021 confirmed an additional £1.3bn for the devolved administrations this year:

- £605m for the Scottish Government of which £515m is resource funding and £90m is capital funding.
- £425m for the Welsh Government of which £315m is resource funding and £110m is capital funding.
- £235m for the Northern Ireland Executive of which £175m is resource funding and £60m in capital funding.

Detail of funding provided to the devolved administrations at Spending Review 21 can be found online at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-and-spending-review-2021-documents>

**Ian Murray:**

**[69609]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much of the Barnett consequentialia resulting from the Autumn Budget 2021 are as a result of health spending in England.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Autumn Budget 2021 confirmed an additional £1.3bn for the devolved administrations this year:

- £605m for the Scottish Government
- £425m for the Welsh Government
- £235m for the Northern Ireland Executive

These figures include Barnett consequentialia resulting from the additional £5.4bn provided to the NHS in England to support the Covid-19 response over the coming months. Precise detail on the consequentialia resulting from this spending will be provided in the next publication of the Block Grant Transparency.

Detail of funding provided to the devolved administrations at Spending Review 21 can be found online at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-and-spending-review-2021-documents>

## ■ Public Sector Debt

**Liam Byrne:**

**[67070]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish an assessment of the impact of his receipt of IMF Special Drawing Rights on public sector net debt.

**Liam Byrne:**

**[67071]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish an assessment of the impact of re-channelling Special Drawing Rights via the IMF on public sector net debt.

**John Glen:**

The historic \$650bn allocation of IMF SDRs has provided much needed liquidity for vulnerable countries, freeing up resources to pay for crucial needs such as vaccines and food imports. The UK, together with other G20 countries, have called on the IMF to work quickly with the membership to explore options for countries with strong external positions to voluntarily channel a portion of their allocated SDRs, to magnify the impact of the allocation and further support resilient and sustainable recoveries in vulnerable countries.

The OBR reported the fiscal impact of the SDR allocation in its October 2021 Economic and Fiscal Outlook. This noted that the SDR allocation results in an equal

increase in both the UK's assets and liabilities and has no effect on wider balance sheet aggregates.

The channeling of SDRs through lending to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) does not directly affect public sector net debt.

## ■ Public Sector: Pay

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[67187\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, whether the public sector pay increases proposed in his Budget statement will be funded Departmental funding or will need to be met from employers.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The government set out that overall spending will increase in real terms for every department as a result of Spending Review 2021 and over the parliament.

It is up to individual departments to weigh up their priorities and consider the affordability of a pay award against other objectives besides pay. In doing so, departments will balance the need to ensure fair pay for public sector workers with protecting funding for frontline services and ensuring affordability for taxpayers.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[67054\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of proposed changes to the normal minimum pension age on the Pensions Dashboard which is built around the concept of a single retirement age.

**John Glen:**

Pensions dashboards are still at an early stage of development and testing. The information that will be presented to consumers via pensions dashboards, and how it is displayed, will continue to evolve. DWP plans to consult in due course on regulations which would set out the requirements for dashboards.

Pensions dashboards will increase overall awareness and understanding of pensions, where individuals will be able to see information about the value of their different pensions, all in one place.

The way in which pension value information is produced and displayed is also under development and will be subject to user testing and consultation.

## ■ Tax Avoidance: Telephone Services

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[62863\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to establish a 24-hour helpline for people subject to the Loan Charge.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[62866\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people who were liable for the Loan Charge have taken their own lives.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government takes concerns about the wellbeing of all taxpayers seriously and recognises that the Loan Charge can add significant pressures for some taxpayers.

Following Lord Morse's Independent Loan Charge Review, the Government has taken further steps to mitigate the impact of the Loan Charge and to ensure that the right support is in place for those who need it.

HMRC operates a settlement helpline and a debt helpline for taxpayers who have used disguised remuneration avoidance schemes. All call handlers are trained to identify taxpayers who might need additional support. For taxpayers who need specialised help, HMRC advisors suggest they contact organisations like Samaritans or Mind. The Government is working with HMRC to consider what additional specialised support could be provided to taxpayers who need extra help.

HMRC has referred eight cases to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) where a taxpayer has sadly taken their life and used a disguised remuneration scheme, as required by the law governing the IOPC's oversight of HMRC. Following referral, HMRC has conducted independent investigations and the completed investigations have concluded that there was no evidence of misconduct by an HMRC officer.

Any loss of life is a tragedy, and my thoughts are with the families of those affected.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Amazon: Pay

**Catherine West:**

[\[67225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of recent reports that Amazon plans to cut the pay of its yard marshals by 23 per cent; and whether she has made representations to Amazon as a result of those reports.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has not made any representations to Amazon with regards to their pay and conditions and no assessment of the impact on DWP policies has been made. The responsibility for employment law and employee rights sits with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).



**■ Asylum: Government Assistance****Sam Tarry:**[\[67301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what additional support her Department provides to asylum seekers whose universal credit payments have been stopped.

**David Rutley:**

Those seeking asylum in the UK are not entitled to Universal Credit. However, Asylum Support is available to newly recognised refugees through the Home Office whilst their status is under consideration. This support continues for 28 days after refugee status is granted. A claim to Universal Credit can then be made immediately once refugee status is granted and Asylum Support is not deducted from their Universal Credit award during the 28 days run on period.

Work coaches receive training to help them build supportive relationships with claimants, including refugees, encouraging them to openly discuss any barriers, concerns or problems as they emerge. Provided the eligibility criteria for Universal Credit are met, we will offer an advance payment to a refugee when making a new claim, and staff have access to information on a range of services and support available in their local area for vulnerable claimants, including refugees. We also have access to a range of translation services to assist, should a claimant need support to overcome any language barriers.

**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Remote Working****Gavin Newlands:**[\[68327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance is provided on home working to staff in her Department resident in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department has a long-standing policy on the circumstances in which an employee might request and be allowed to work from home.

This policy was supplemented in July 2021 with publication of new guidance for those employees that are designated 'hybrid workers'. This new guide covers a wider range of topics, such as effective performance management and caring whilst working from home.

Both the long-standing home working policy and new hybrid working guidance apply consistently across England, Scotland and Wales .

**■ Members: Correspondence****Rosie Cooper:**[\[69026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to a letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 16 September 2021, reference ZA57691 regarding a pension claim.

**Guy Opperman:**

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 4 November 2021.

**Afzal Khan:**[\[69171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans on providing a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 1 October 2021 regarding Amirabbas Banan Nino.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Department has undertaken a thorough check of the correspondence tracking system and have no record of the correspondence of 1 October. We have contacted the Member's constituency office for further information.

**Older Workers: Training****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[65412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what initiatives she is promoting to assist older people on Jobseekers Allowance who are considering changing career or retraining.

**Mims Davies:**

The Chancellor announced in the 2021 Spending Review that an enhanced offer for workers aged 50 and over will be introduced, to ensure that older workers receive the support they need to remain in or return to work.

The enhanced offer will build on the Department's existing Plan for Jobs which provides funding to ensure that more jobseekers of all ages get tailored support, including to reskill or pivot sectors. That includes programmes such as the Job Finding Support service, Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS), Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) and the Restart scheme, to help them find work. The JETS scheme in particular helps claimants to update their digital skills, job searching tools and to identify transferrable skills which has led to over 48,780 jobseekers in England and Wales and over 1,960 in Scotland start work.

The SWAPs provides opportunities in sectors with high volumes of current local vacancies, such as hospitality, allowing people to learn the skills and behaviours that employers need. DWP is increasing the number of SWAPs opportunities to 80,000 in 2021/22.

A network of 50 Plus Champions provides dedicated support to Work Coaches across all 37 Jobcentre Plus districts to enable and encourage them to direct suitable Plan for Jobs and local support to claimants aged 50 and over. The Government's Business Champion for Older Workers also spearheads the Government's work to support employers to hire and re-train older workers, promoting the benefits of older workers to employers across England.

To help people plan for employment in later life, we launched a Mid-life MOT in 2019, encouraging those in their 40s, 50s and 60s to consider aspects of their wealth, work

and wellbeing. This helps them to make informed decisions about future income provision and longer-term employment prospects, supporting individuals to stay in work for longer and to achieve the later life that they want.

The UK government are also investing in the National Skills Fund in England to aid The Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Since April 2021, adults of any age over 24 who are looking to achieve their first full Level 3 qualification have been able to access fully funded courses which will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market. Skills Bootcamps, which are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, are giving adults the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. As announced at the Budget, a total investment of over £550m by 2024-25 will make sure adults, at any age, can upskill to reach their potential, transforming lives and delivering on the National Skills Fund commitment.

The free online Skills Toolkit also provides online learning focused on digital, numeracy and employability skills.

## ■ Social Security Benefits

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[67091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a method to assess whether a benefit claimant has permanently left the UK.

**David Rutley:**

DWP takes fraudulent claims very seriously, which is why we have a range of measures in place to identify when someone has permanently left the UK and is no longer entitled to benefits.

Universal Credit, like certain other benefits, is only payable in the UK, although it can be claimed legitimately during limited periods of absence. Our operational staff are trained to deal with such cases, which helps ensure claimants do not receive benefits incorrectly. For Universal Credit, claimants will also have regular work-focussed interviews as part of their claim.

In addition, we regularly monitor claims, working closely with other Government Departments. For Universal Credit, our increased use of data and analytics, along with enhanced checks where intelligence indicates a risk of fraud, is proving extremely effective in preventing and detecting this type of loss.

Similarly, a combination of data matching and Life Certificates is helping ensure that State Pension is paid correctly to people living overseas.

All individuals in receipt of a DWP benefits are required to inform the Department if their address changes, including if they move to another country. This is clearly set out in our communications to customers. If claims are made where there is no entitlement, the Department will consider formal action and, where appropriate, prosecution. We will also recover any overpayment incurred.

**James Daly:**

[\[67316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that the tender process for Help to Claim retains adequate face-to-face provision.

**David Rutley:**

The Department is committed to providing the best possible support for all our claimants, including the most vulnerable in society, in both making and maintaining their claim.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, we plan to replace 'Help to Claim' with the 'Future Support Offer'. The competition to deliver this support has recently closed and we will announce more details in due course.

Until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland will continue to deliver the Help to Claim support, mainly through their telephony and web chat channels. However, both organisations have started re-introducing face to face support within a number of sites, in line with Government guidance, and we will continue to support them with this.

#### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Deductions**

**Layla Moran:**

[\[69686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of claimants on legacy benefits had deductions made to their payments for third party debt deductions in May 2021.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

#### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Disability**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[68410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of legacy benefits for people with severe disabilities.

**Chloe Smith:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* There are a number of legacy benefits but people with severe disabilities are most likely to be in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). ESA is paid at different rates depending on an individual's circumstances. In income-related ESA, claimants with severe disabilities may also be eligible for additional amounts, such as the Enhanced Disability Premium and or the Severe Disability Premium. To reflect the functional impacts of their health condition or disability on their capability to work, claimants found to have limited capability for work and work related activity receive an additional support group component.

Claimants may also be eligible for Personal Independence Payment to help meet the extra costs of living faced by disabled people.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Stephen Timms:** [\[68103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral evidence given by the Permanent Secretary to the Public Accounts Committee on Thursday 28 October 2021, Qs 59-62, when her Department plans to start paying the State Pension due to (a) Gerald Simon Pengelley, following his application submitted on 30 July and (b) Iain Davidson, following his application submitted on 4 June 2021.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* Both applications have been processed and are being paid.

**Dan Carden:** [\[68411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the State Pension in tackling pensioner poverty; and if she will make a statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* In the latest statistics there were 200,000 fewer pensioners in absolute poverty, after housing costs, compared to 2009/10.

The State Pension is the foundation of support for older people, providing the basis on which people can build additional private savings for their retirement. Under this Government, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is now over £2,050 higher than in 2010.

In addition, Pension Credit provides invaluable financial support for the most vulnerable pensioners and is a passport to a range of other benefits.

## ■ Unemployment: Older People

**Darren Henry:** [\[904075\]](#)

What support her Department provides to older jobseekers to reskill or change careers.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department's plan for jobs provides funding to ensure that more jobseekers of all ages get tailored support, including to reskill or pivot sectors. This includes programmes such as the Job Finding Support service, Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) and the Restart scheme, to help them find work. The JETS scheme in particular helps jobseekers update their digital skills, job searching tools and to identify transferrable skills, which has been extended to September 2022.

Additionally, as part of the £500m Plan for Jobs expansion, we are funding a new enhanced support package for workers over the age of 50 to help them to stay in and return to work. This offer has two strands – Older workers will receive better information and guidance on later life planning, helping them make informed choices and supporting them to plan their career and remain in work. For those who have lost their jobs, this funding will ensure that older job seekers on Universal Credit receive

more intensive, tailored support as they look to take the next step in their career. A network of 50 Plus Champions across all 37 Jobcentre Plus districts will enable and encourage work coaches to direct suitable Plan for Jobs and local support to claimants aged 50 and over

The UK government are also investing £2.5 billion in the National Skills Fund in England to aid The Lifetime Skills Guarantee. From April 2021, adults of any age over 24 who are looking to achieve their first full Level 3 will be able to access fully funded courses which will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market. The free online Skills Toolkit also provides online learning focused on digital, numeracy and employability skills.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### WORK AND PENSIONS

#### ■ Employment Schemes

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[57102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coaches by (a) full time equivalent and (b) headcount were employed by her Department in each year since 2010.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 November 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Mims Davies:**

The staffing resource assigned to Work Coach and Disability Employment Adviser activities is given below, measured as Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) based on activity-based management (ABM) activities and Staff in Post (SiP).

Disability Employment Adviser is one of several activities that are counted as Work Coach activities. As such, Disability Employment Advisers are shown as a subset of Work Coaches.

It is shown as at the end of each financial year since 2018-19, when Work Coach activity was first recorded as a discrete role within our data.

NATIONAL	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
Staff in Post			
Work Coaches	16,315	16,191	27,286
<i>of which</i>			
Disability Employment Advisers <sup>1</sup>	555	657	585
Full Time Equivalent (ABM activities) <sup>2</sup>			
Work Coaches	13,287	12,938	23,833
<i>of which</i>			
Disability Employment Advisers	441	546	478



CENTRAL SCOTLAND <sup>3</sup>	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
<b>Staff in Post</b>			
<b>Work Coaches</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>403</b>
<b>of which</b>			
<b>Disability Employment Advisers<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Full Time Equivalent (ABM activities)<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>Work Coaches</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>338</b>
<b>of which</b>			
<b>Disability Employment Advisers</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

#### Notes to the tables

1. Those carrying out Disability Employment Adviser activities may have this as their only activity, or may split their time between this and other Work Coach activities.
2. FTE (ABM activities) is from Departmental Management Information which records how much of each persons' role is spent doing certain types of work activity. This is then aggregated and rounded to the nearest whole number. The FTE (ABM activities) is therefore lower than the total Staff in Post.
3. The main Glasgow conurbation falls within the Central Scotland Jobcentre District.

#### ■ Employment Schemes: Disability

**Alison Thewliss:**

**[57103]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Disability Employment Advisers by (a) full time equivalent and (b) headcount have been employed by her Department in each year since that role was introduced.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 November 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Mims Davies:**

The staffing resource assigned to Work Coach and Disability Employment Adviser activities is given below, measured as Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) based on activity-based management (ABM) activities and Staff in Post (SiP).

Disability Employment Adviser is one of several activities that are counted as Work Coach activities. As such, Disability Employment Advisers are shown as a subset of Work Coaches.

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<b>Full Time Equivalent (ABM activities)<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>Work Coaches</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>338</b>

CENTRAL SCOTLAND <sup>3</sup>	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
of which			
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3. The main Glasgow conurbation falls within the Central Scotland Jobcentre District.

#### ■ Employment Schemes: Glasgow

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[57104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) work coaches and (b) Disability Employment Advisors by (i) full time equivalent and (ii) headcount her Department has employed in Glasgow in each year since 2010.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 November 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Mims Davies:**

The staffing resource assigned to Work Coach and Disability Employment Adviser activities is given below, measured as Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) based on activity-based management (ABM) activities and Staff in Post (SiP).

Disability Employment Adviser is one of several activities that are counted as Work Coach activities. As such, Disability Employment Advisers are shown as a subset of Work Coaches.

It is shown as at the end of each financial year since 2018-19, when Work Coach activity was first recorded as a discrete role within our data.

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Staff in Post			

NATIONAL	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
Work Coaches	16,315	16,191	27,286
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CENTRAL SCOTLAND <sup>3</sup>	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
<b>Staff in Post</b>			
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3. **The main Glasgow conurbation falls within the Central Scotland Jobcentre District.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

## EDUCATION

## ■ Further Education Update

**The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Higher and Further Education (Alex Burghart):** [\[HCWS385\]](#)

Today I am announcing details of the government's capital investment of £83 million in 2021-22 to help eligible post-16 education providers[1] accommodate the expected demographic increase in 16 to 19-year-olds.

Thirty-nine post-16 education providers have been awarded a share of the multi-million capital funding for projects that will enable them to add extra capacity where there is a pressing need to ensure there are enough places in their local area to absorb an increase in 16 -19 learners. This investment will lead to providers being able to accommodate an extra 14,000 learners. We launched a bidding round for the funding on 18 May 2021.

These post 16 education providers will be able to develop new high quality flexible buildings and facilities, to ensure there will be sufficient places for 16 - 19 learners in their areas to gain the skills they need to progress and help the economy to grow.

The 39 education providers which will benefit from Post 16 capacity funding are:

POST 16 EDUCATION PROVIDER		LOCAL AUTHORITY		POST 16 EDUCATION PROVIDER		LOCAL AUTHORITY	
Aston University Engineering Academy		Birmingham		Kirklees College		Kirklees	
Barton Peveril Sixth Form College		Hampshire		Long Road Sixth Form College		Cambridgeshire	
Bedford College		Bedford		Luminate Education Group		Leeds	
Bilborough Sixth Form College (Better Futures MAT)		Nottingham		Luton Sixth Form College		Luton	
Brockenhurst College		Hampshire		Milton Keynes College		Milton Keynes	
Christ the King Sixth Form		Lewisham		New College Pontefract (New Collaborative Learning Trust)		Wakefield	
Cirencester College		Gloucestershire		Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College		Leeds	

POST 16 EDUCATION PROVIDER	LOCAL AUTHORITY	POST 16 EDUCATION PROVIDER	LOCAL AUTHORITY
City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College (Potteries Educational Trust)	Stoke-on-Trent	Peter Symonds College	Hampshire
City of Wolverhampton College	Wolverhampton	Portsmouth College	Portsmouth
Dixons Sixth Form Academy (Dixons Academies Trust)	Bradford	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College	Darlington
Durham Sixth Form Centre	County Durham	Ron Dearing University Technical College	Kingston upon Hull
East Kent College Group	Kent	Runshaw College	Lancashire
Hereford Sixth Form College (Heart of Mercia Academy Trust)	Herefordshire	Sandwell College	Sandwell
Hills Road Sixth Form College	Cambridgeshire	St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College	Wandsworth
Huddersfield New College	Kirklees	St Vincent College (Lighthouse Learning Trust)	Hampshire
Inspire Education Group	Peterborough	Suffolk New College	Suffolk
Itchen Sixth Form College	Southampton	TEC Partnership	North Yorkshire
John Leggott College	North Lincolnshire	The Henley College	Oxfordshire
Joseph Chamberlain 6th Form College	Birmingham	Woking College	Surrey
		Wyke Sixth Form College	Kingston upon Hull

This investment should be seen in the wider context of our reforms to further education. The White Paper '[Skills for Jobs Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#)' sets out



our vision of enabling everyone to get the high-quality skills employers need in a way that suits them. The reforms set out plans to transform technical education, boost UK productivity, build back better from the Coronavirus pandemic, and create a more prosperous country for all.

[1] Eligible education providers that could apply to this fund were: FE colleges, designated institutions, Sixth Form Colleges, 16-19 academies, including free schools, UTCs, Studio schools and Maths schools.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ NATO Parliamentary Assembly

**Minister for Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly):** [\[HCWS383\]](#)

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton has replaced the Rt. Hon. the Lord Jopling DL as a Member of the United Kingdom delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Correction to Written Parliamentary Questions 90063, 97759, 117196 and 117198

**Minister of State for Health (Edward Argar):** [\[HCWS380\]](#)

I would like to inform the House that a written answer I gave on 24 September 2020, Official Report 90063 (and subsequent to that, answers 97759, 117196 and 117198), to the hon. Member for Romford and the hon. Member for Scunthorpe was incomplete.

In 2018 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published guidance on *Hearing loss in adults* which advises against ear wax syringing due to its associated risks. However, I recognise that by incorrectly implying that ear wax syringing is solely an enhanced service this could have been interpreted to mean that necessary and clinically appropriate ear wax removal should not be free at the point of use on the NHS.

GP practices are increasingly recommending self-care methods as the primary means to support the safe removal of ear wax and to prevent its build up. If, however, a GP practice considers removal clinically necessary, ear irrigation or microsuction (as clinically appropriate) should either be undertaken at the practice (if they have the expertise and equipment), or the patient should be referred to an appropriate local NHS service.

Local commissioners are responsible for arranging for the provision of medical services to the extent they consider necessary to meet the reasonable needs of the people for whom they are responsible. Therefore commissioners should ensure that there is appropriate access to ear wax removal services, where these are necessary and clinically appropriate for a patient, which are free at the point of use.

**LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES****■ Common Frameworks update**

**Parliamentary-Under Secretary for Levelling Up - Local Government, Constitution and the Union (Neil O'Brien):** [\[HCWS384\]](#)

I am today laying before Parliament a report, 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 March to 25 June 2021'. I am laying this report because it is a legal requirement under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 for quarterly reports to be made to Parliament on the progress of the work to develop Common Frameworks. The report is available on [GOV.UK](#) and details the progress made between the UK Government and devolved administrations regarding the development of Common Frameworks. This report details progress made during the twelfth 3-month reporting period, and sets out that no 'freezing' regulations have been brought forward under section 12 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act. A copy of the 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 March to 25 June 2021' report has been placed in the library of both Houses. The publication of the report reflects the Government's continued commitment to transparency.

**TRANSPORT****■ International Travel Update**

**Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):** [\[HCWS386\]](#)

This statement provides an update on international travel.

From 4am on Monday 22 November, the Government will recognise vaccines on the World Health Organization's Emergency Use Listing (WHO EUL) at our border.

In practice, this means that Sinovac, Sinopharm Beijing and Covaxin will be added to our list of approved vaccines for inbound travel, benefitting more fully vaccinated people from countries around the world. The WHO Emergency Use Listing process includes a review of quality, safety and efficacy data performed by WHO experts, and many countries including the United States, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Iceland are already recognising the WHO EUL vaccines. These vaccines are in addition to the existing vaccines we recognise at the border, namely Oxford/AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer BioNTech and Janssen (Johnson and Johnson).

As such, from 4am on 22 November, travellers who have proof of vaccination with a full course of these approved vaccines will be treated the same as those fully vaccinated in the UK, and so will not have to self-isolate on arrival or take a pre-departure test, and only need to take a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test post-arrival (with confirmatory PCR if positive). This will benefit passengers with proof of vaccination from the over 135 countries and territories in scope of the policy.

Further, all under-18s coming to England from non-red list countries will be treated as fully vaccinated at the border and will be exempt from self-isolation requirements on arrival, day 8 testing and pre-departure testing.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, the Government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel and aims to ensure a whole UK approach.

The Government continues to keep our measures under review and will not hesitate to act if we perceive a risk to public health.

## TREASURY

### ■ Central Bank Digital Currency

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

[\[HCWS381\]](#)

The UK, like many countries, is actively exploring the potential role of a retail central bank digital currency (CBDC) as a complement to cash and bank deposits. A retail CBDC would be a new form of digital money, denominated in Sterling and issued by the Bank of England, for use by people and businesses for their everyday payments needs. Exploring the opportunities that a CBDC could offer is aligned with the government's wider agenda to remain at the forefront of innovation and technology in financial services.

Earlier this year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a Taskforce jointly chaired by HM Treasury and the Bank of England to lead the UK's exploration of a UK CBDC, along with forums to engage a broad range of stakeholders from across our economy and society, including consumer groups, think tanks, businesses, academics, financial institutions and technology experts. The Taskforce will ensure the UK authorities adopt a strategic and coordinated approach as they explore a CBDC, in line with their statutory objectives.

No decision has been taken by the government and Bank of England as to whether to issue a UK CBDC, which would be a major national infrastructure project. A decision will be based on a rigorous assessment of the overall case for a UK CBDC and will be informed by extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation.

Exploring and delivering a UK CBDC, if there were a decision to proceed, would require carefully sequenced phases of work, which will span several years. I am today setting out the next steps for the exploration of a UK CBDC.

The UK authorities are currently engaged in a process of research and exploration to examine the opportunities and implications of CBDC. As part of those explorations, HM Treasury and the Bank of England will publish a consultation in 2022 setting out their assessment of the case for a UK CBDC, including the merits of further work to develop an operational and technology model for a UK CBDC.

If there is a decision to proceed following the consultation, a development phase would include the publication, by the Bank of England, of a technical specification to explain the

proposed conceptual architecture for a UK CBDC. This development phase could involve in-depth testing of the optimal design for, and feasibility of, a UK CBDC.

Following this, a decision would be taken on whether to move into a subsequent build and testing phase. Given the scale and national importance of such a project, this phase would likely take several years and could involve the development of large-scale prototypes and live pilots.

Were the results of each of these phases to conclude that the case for CBDC were made, and that it were operationally and technologically robust, then the earliest date for launch of a UK CBDC would be in the second half of the decade.

The government is also committed to continuing to work closely with international partners on the cross-border implications of a potential CBDC. The UK, through its G7 Presidency, has been leading the global conversation on the opportunities and implications of CBDC. G7 central banks and finance ministries have developed a set of public policy principles for CBDC, and a full report capturing these principles was published in October. These international principles for CBDC represent a step change in the global conversation and are intended to support and inform exploration of CBDCs in the G7 and beyond.

## ■ Financial Services

### **The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

[\[HCWS382\]](#)

The government has today laid before Parliament the second consultation on the Future Regulatory Framework (FRF) Review, *Financial Services Future Regulatory Framework Review: Proposals for Reform (CP 548)*. The FRF Review provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that, having left the EU, the UK establishes a coherent, agile, and internationally respected approach to financial services regulation that is right for the UK.

In his speech at Mansion House on 1 July 2021, the Chancellor set out the government's vision for an open, green and technologically advanced financial services sector that is globally competitive and acts in the interests of communities and citizens across the UK. Delivering the outcomes of the FRF Review is a key part of achieving this vision.

An initial consultation was published in October 2020. HM Treasury received over 120 responses and has carried out significant further engagement with the sector. The consultation document laid today sets out the government's response to the feedback received, and the proposals to deliver the intended outcomes of the FRF Review.

The consultation sets out a number of proposals to build on the strengths of the UK's existing domestic framework of financial services regulation, including by:

- Ensuring that, as the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), take on greater responsibility, their objectives continue to be appropriate. To reflect the importance of the sector as an engine for growth across the wider economy and the UK's position as a global financial centre, the

government intends to introduce a new secondary growth and international competitiveness objective for both the PRA and the FCA.

- Moving to a system where the financial services regulators take responsibility for setting many of the direct regulatory requirements which were previously set by the EU, establishing a comprehensive FSMA model of financial services regulation for the UK. This will be achieved by repealing the majority of retained EU financial services legislation, with the regulators given powers to replace the current requirements with their own rules. This will ensure a more agile regulatory framework for the future while supporting the UK's commitment to high standards of regulation.
- Ensuring that there continues to be appropriate democratic input into, and public oversight of, the regulators' activities. This means strengthening the mechanisms through which Parliament holds the regulators to account and which underpin the regulators' relationship with HM Treasury, in addition to proposals to improve stakeholder engagement in the regulatory policymaking process.

This publication is available on [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and will be open for responses until 9 February 2022.

Future Regulatory Framework Review: Proposals for Reform:

[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-regulatory-framework-frf-review-proposals-for-reform](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-regulatory-framework-frf-review-proposals-for-reform)